JUDGING ELENA KAGAN

THE Nation.

SHAKEUP IN THE UK

D.D. GUTTENPLAN & MARIA MARGARONIS • GARY YOUNGE

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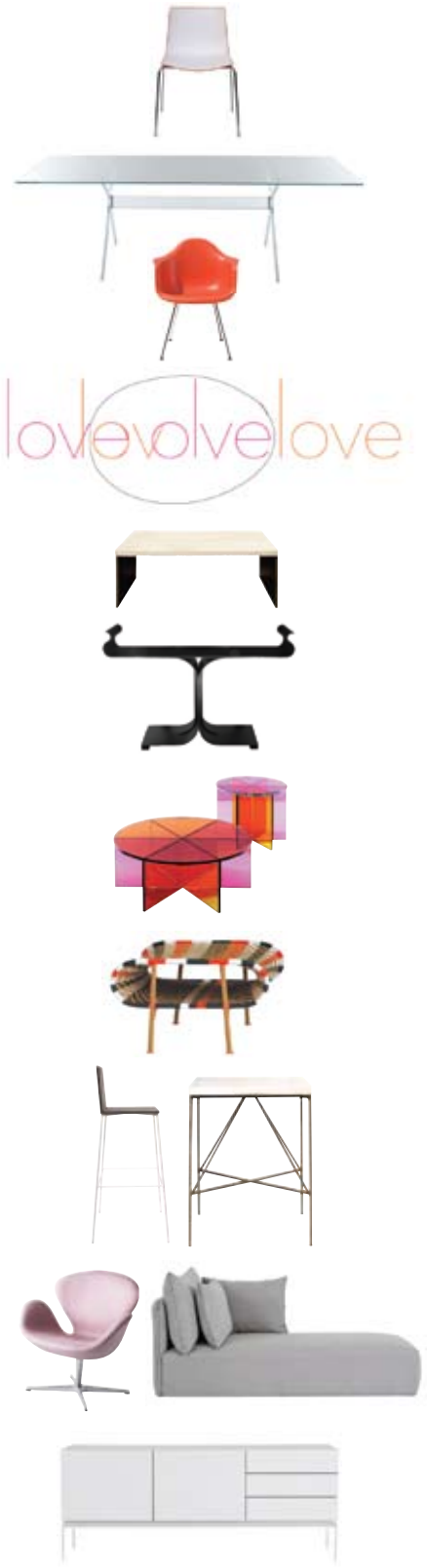

Letters

On Being Green

Philadelphia
Re the "'Climategate' Claptrap" articles by Mark Hertsgaard and Johann Hari [May 3]: I wish the climate-change deniers would deny away cancer, diabetes and heart disease. Let's face it, the health food and medical industries are making money hand over fist spreading the "healthy eating and exercise" mythology.
Ben Schilke

Chicago
As a liberal, I guess I'm supposed to be in favor of offsets/cap-and-trade/whatever you want to call it [Heather Rogers, "Offset Buyers Beware," May 3]. I'm not. If there are standards, let everyone live up to them. There is no good reason to let businesses and wealthy individuals off just because they can pay. Meet the standards or pay like any other jamoke on the block. The hell with offsets.
Charlie Newman

On Being Black

Ypsilanti, Mich.
Regarding Melissa Harris-Lacewell's "Black by Choice" [May 3]: I understand the history behind President Obama's decision to label himself only as black on his Census form. But I thought the point of Obama's candidacy and presidency was that this is a new day—Change We Can Believe In—not the same old same old.
William J. Rouster

Bronx, N.Y.
Our president chose to identify himself as black. We can try to guess what is in his head, but the fact is, he chose not to check "mixed" or "white." As a black person, I feel I am part of a diaspora and a history, not simply a color. Our president embraces that history wholeheartedly. Kudos to him. Not all are wise enough to do that, including many of us who grew up with two black parents.
Kayan Clarke

letters@thenation.com

Worcester, Mass.
Many people do not understand that when you are consistently boxed into a category at a young age, you tend to own it rather than fight it. When you tell people you are mixed—in my case, Russian, Italian and African-American—and people consistently challenge that, it is easier to just say, You know what, I *am* black. Perhaps President Obama has been making the choice for most of his life. As Melissa Harris-Lacewell points out, Obama challenges the very notion of whiteness. Intelligence, charisma, Ivy League education and intact "family values" have usually been attributed to whiteness. To deny that is to deny this country's history. Obama shows white America that a black man can excel as much as, if not more than, a white man. And that is the pure fear behind much of the Tea Party activism.
Danielle Cole

San Diego
As a biracial American, I was always considered black—not half-white, all black. I have no problem with Obama not marking both "white" and "black" on his Census form. It was a shout-out to his African heritage and to black Americans. It was a statement to America and the world that he is proud to be black. Some say Obama threw his mother under the bus by checking only "black" on his form. This ridiculous claim does not take into account that for 200 years one drop of black meant *all black*—when applying for jobs, loans and mortgages, driving, being arrested, we were black.

I'm so excited to be led by President Obama. He is a thoughtful, brilliant, calm and strong black leader—and I couldn't be more proud.
Sarah Brown

On Being Read

Mendocino, Calif.
Thank you for Jordan Davis's perceptive review of the latest Darwish translations,

(continued on page 24)

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Judging Elena Kagan

In what is by now an oft-quoted snippet from one of her law review articles, Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan castigated the confirmation hearings of Justices Souter, Kennedy, Ginsburg and Breyer as a "vapid and hollow charade." Since Kagan wrote those words in 1995, three more Justices—Roberts, Alito and Sotomayor—have been nominated and confirmed, each in more or less the manner Kagan described: a "peculiar ritual dance" in which senators politely ask questions that the nominees politely refuse to answer, a farce dominated by, in Kagan's words, the "repetition of platitudes" and "personal anecdotes."

EDITORIAL

What is less remarked upon is that in her article Kagan proposed a model for a more vigorous and candid confirmation hearing—that of Judge Robert Bork. The process worked in that instance, she argued, not because of the particular result but because the hearings "presented to the public a serious discussion of the meaning of the Constitution, the role of the Court, and the views of the nominee; that discussion at once educated the public and allowed it to determine whether the nominee would move the Court in the proper direction." In both popular and right-wing parlance, "borking" now means to vilify and defame a nominee in order to block his appointment, but Kagan's description is in fact a far more accurate account of what happened—senators rigorously probed and considered Bork's legal opinions and voted accordingly. So it is with this understanding that we propose, in the spirit of democratic deliberation of which she so eloquently wrote, that Elena Kagan should be borked.

Since President Obama nominated Kagan, many of her former colleagues have spoken passionately about her intelligence, her commitment to the First Amendment (her field of expertise) and her ability to craft consensus and convince conservative legal minds. They assure us, based on their personal and professional encounters with her, that Kagan would be a reliable liberal vote and invoke what is undeniably a sterling record of professional accomplishments and political associations—working as a research assistant for Laurence Tribe, clerking for Abner Mikva and Thurgood Marshall and shepherding Ruth Bader Ginsburg's nomination through the Senate before working in the Clinton administration and teaching law at Chicago and Harvard, where she was dean.

Progressive critics of Kagan argue that as a replacement for Justice John Paul Stevens—a formidable liberal voice on the Court, particularly on civil liberties—she would move the Court to the right. They point to statements made during her confirmation hearing for solicitor general suggesting that she believes the nation has been "at war" since the 1990s and in which she agreed that the government could detain suspected terrorists indefinitely. They worry about how vehemently she defended the administration's assertions of executive power once in that position. Kagan's advocates argue that she was compelled to do so because her duty as solicitor general is to present the government's case—and that her arguments before the Court in that capacity do not necessarily reflect her own views. They point instead to a memo she wrote with deans of other law schools aggressively challenging Congress's attempt under the Bush administration to strip the courts of their power to review the legality of detainees' imprisonment.

The truth is, on the fundamental issues of executive power and civil liberties, we simply do not know enough about Kagan's views; because she was never a judge and has a relatively slim paper trail

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as a scholar and a litigator (in which her role was constrained), we are left parsing these few statements for larger meaning. The same is true on matters of corporate power and other vital issues. When Kagan argued the administration's case in *Citizens United v. FEC*, against granting corporations near limitless rights to political spending, was she expressing her views or those of the president? When she urged President Clinton to accept compromise legislation banning late-term abortions, was she articulating her opinion about the right to privacy under *Roe v. Wade*, or was she merely offering legal advice in her role as a White House aide? When she said there is not a "constitutional right to same-sex marriage," was she articulating her understanding of equal protection under the Constitution, or merely describing objectively the current state of constitutional law? And if the former, how does that belief square with her statement that the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy is "a moral injustice of the first order"?

Kagan should be pressed on all these matters during her confirmation hearing. Will she get the serious discussion and substantive debate that she once advocated for all Supreme Court nominees? That depends on two things. Will Senate Democrats exercise their duty to review the nominee independently, or will they defer to the president out of expediency, ensuring what Kagan once lamented as the "safest and surest route to the prize"? And will Senate Republicans allow such debate to take place, or will they make a mockery of the process and take the line of attack already fomenting on right-wing websites—whisper campaigns about her personal life, unsubstantiated assertions that she is a "stealth radical" and unsupportable claims that she is underqualified ("the Left's Harriet Miers")? In other words, will they bork Elena Kagan in the pejorative sense of the term?

We can again look to Kagan's words for guidance here. Personal attacks and caricatures of a nominee as a "radical monster" are made possible, she argued, in a vacuum of serious inquiry. "The way to promote reasoned debate thus lies not in submerging substantive issues," she wrote, "but in making them the centerpiece of the confirmation process." On this matter, we could not agree more.

Pakistan's Challenge

COMMENT

Among the many lessons the United States may have gleaned from the story of failed Times Square bomber Faisal Shahzad, the one that may be hardest to absorb is that America's Pakistan problem is getting worse, not better, on President Obama's watch. There is seemingly nothing the administration hasn't tried in its effort to contain the threat of terrorism from Pakistan. It has tried anger, kindness, money and love. Its desperation is palpable, with Hillary Clinton once again left to be the bad cop, sternly warning Pakistan of "severe consequences" if a successful attack is ever traced to it.

Pakistanis may be forgiven for being unmoved. They have stared severe consequences in the face for nearly four years. The terror campaign of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)—the

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Noted.

SPRING LAURELS: We are pleased to announce that *The Nation*'s United Nations correspondent, **Barbara Crossette**, has been honored with the 2010 **Shorenstein Journalism Award**. The prize recognizes a journalist whose body of work has "helped American readers to understand the complexities of Asia." It is presented jointly by Stanford University's **Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Center** and the **Shorenstein Center on Press, Politics and Public Policy** at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Crossette, who writes frequently on TheNation.com, was the **New York Times**'s UN bureau chief from 1994 to 2001 and, before that, its chief correspondent in Southeast Asia.

On April 24 **Aram Roston** was honored with the 2010 **Daniel Pearl Award for Outstanding International Investigative Reporting** at the **Global Investigative Journalism Conference** in Geneva. Roston won this accolade for his *Nation* cover story "How the US Funds the Taliban" (Nov. 30, 2009).

On May 3, longtime *Nation* contributer and **Carnal Knowledge** columnist **JoAnn Wypijewski** was recognized for career achievement in independent journalism by the **James Aronson Awards for Social Justice Journalism**. In their twentieth year, the Aronson Awards have celebrated such distinguished writers as **Mike Davis**, **Molly Ivins**, **Amy Goodman** and **Seymour Hersh**. Wypijewski was singled out for her articles in *Harper's* and columns in *The Nation*, which feature "original reporting on the interweaving of social and sexual issues."

A HUMAN RIGHTS HEROINE: **Rhonda Copelon** died on May 6 after a four-year battle with ovarian cancer. She probably would have died earlier if she had not researched her condition in the same way that she researched her legal briefs: thoroughly, creatively and passionately, leaving no stone unturned and no theory unexamined.

In her forty-year career, first as a litigator at the **Center for Constitutional Rights**, then as a professor and founding head of the **International Women's Human Rights Clinic** at the City University of New York's Law School, she established herself as a world-class pioneer in the use of law as a tool for exposing grievous wrongs and, sometimes, redressing them.

Her work encompassed the whole landscape of human rights, with an emphasis on gender issues. A panorama of her activities would include arguing against the Hyde Amendment in the Supreme Court; lobbying for the inclusion of rape as a war crime in the Rome Treaty, which established the **International Criminal Court**; and testifying at the "comfort women" tribunal in Tokyo and at the **Inter-American Court of Human Rights** in Costa Rica.

She was the warmest of friends to her large entourage and the steeliest adversary to establishmentarians who did not recognize basic human rights or—worse, in her opinion—recognized them in principle while claiming that the time for their implementation was "not yet." She accomplished the impossible: she made justice look easy.

PETER WEISS

GSOC LIVES: Challenging a Bush-era precedent that bars graduate students from unionizing, **New York University**'s **Graduate Student Organizing Committee** (GSOC) has filed a petition for a union election with the **National Labor Relations Board**. The petition came just five weeks after President Obama used recess appointments to staff the NLRB with labor lawyers **Craig Becker** and **Mark Pearce**, signaling a shift in the makeup of a board that had become increasingly hostile to workers during the Bush years. If GSOC's petition is successful, it will be the first such victory at a private university since 2004.

That year, in **Brown University v. NLRB**, a Bush-appointed majority stripped graduate student employees of federal labor law protections, calling their relationship to their employer "primarily educational." Dissenting board members protested that the decision was "woefully out of touch with contemporary academic reality," where graduate students are expected to perform an increasing share of the teaching workload on many university campuses. The UN's **International Labour Organization** joined them in condemning the decision.

Shortly after the ruling, NYU, which had recognized GSOC in 2000 under a previous NLRB ruling, withdrew its recognition and refused to negotiate a new contract, provoking a long and bitter strike. Now, hoping for a more sympathetic hearing by an Obama majority on the NLRB, GSOC has once again organized a majority of the 1,800-plus graduate students on campus, who want a union to "achieve security and stability in the workplace." NYU opposes the renewed union drive.

MICHAEL GOULD-WARTOFSKY

AU REVOIR, OBEY: The House's most powerful progressive, **David Obey**, announced in early May that he would not seek re-election, with a statement celebrating his forty-eight-year battle against "American colonialism in Central America," "fiscally irresponsible Reagan budgets" and members of both parties who "let the corporate elites, big banks and Wall Street big shots and insurance company CEOs do anything they want with no regulation to protect investors and consumers." As brash as ever, the **Appropriations Committee** chair highlighted his authorship of last year's House stimulus bill, declaring, "My only apology is that it should have been larger."

Obey will be missed for his willingness to do the heavy legislative lifting and fight the frustrating battles—with Republicans *and* cautious Democrats—to pass progressive proposals. Why did he quit? Obey believed he would retain his seat, but he worried about whether Democrats would retain a sufficient majority—and sufficient drive—to legislate boldly.

"I am, frankly, weary of having to beg on a daily basis that both parties recognize that we do no favor for the country if we neglect to make the long-term investments in education, science, health and energy that are necessary to modernize our economy and decline to raise the revenue needed to pay for those crucial investments," said Obey, who offered an ominous assessment of what may be to come. "I do not want to be in a position as chairman of the Appropriations Committee of producing and defending lowest-common-denominator legislation that is inadequate to that task—and given the mood of the country, that is what I would have to do if I stayed." JOHN NICHOLS

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group alleged by US Attorney General Eric Holder to have facilitated Shahzad's attempted attack—began in 2007. Since then the economy has tanked, overdue reforms have slowed (but thankfully not stopped) and social tensions have grown. Worst of all, TTP and associated groups have killed some 10,000 Pakistanis. If anyone is more desperate for answers than Hillary Clinton and the US government, it is ordinary Pakistanis.

Drones from the sky and Pakistani artillery from below are fulfilling their mission to "disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al-Qaeda." But they are also creating a new, more decentralized and dispersed terrorist threat. Civilian deaths—"collateral damage" from US drones and Pakistani military operations—are feeding into a narrative that pins the primary responsibility for Pakistan's troubles on America. That logic may be a fallacy, and Shahzad might be leading investigators astray. Emerging details about Shahzad's radicalization, however, are revealing.

According to reports, his rage was sparked in part by civilian deaths from US drone attacks. "They shouldn't be shooting people from the sky. You know, they should come down and fight," Shahzad told a Connecticut neighbor about a year ago. By the fall, Shahzad had quit his job and flown to Pakistan, where, during the five months before his return to the States, there were thirty-one drone attacks, almost all targeted at the North Waziristan sanctuary of the TTP, Al Qaeda and the Haqqani network. Interestingly, a drone strike on February 2—the day before Shahzad arrived back in the States—caused a large number of nonmilitary casualties, according to the New America Foundation. Although by the end of 2009 drone accuracy had much improved, it has made little difference to mainstream Pakistani opinion. There is anger and helplessness at being squeezed between the brutality of Al Qaeda and the Taliban and the clumsiness of Pakistani and US efforts to eliminate those terrorists.

Administration officials and US military commanders have for several years been pressing Pakistan to expand its operations into North Waziristan. If rumors of Shahzad having been trained there turn out to be true, it will matter little that he was one of the worst-trained terrorists on record. Pakistan will experience unprecedented pressure to scrap agreements with militants in the area and launch new military operations—with potentially deadly consequences. Pakistani boots-on-the-ground, however, are even more reviled than US drone attacks. Pakistani operations reportedly take a much larger toll on civilian life and property than drones. They also exact much less damage on terrorists.

For more than 150 years the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in North Waziristan and beyond have been governed by a strange cocktail of tribal tradition, Pashtun collective will and the corruption of British and, later, Pakistani bureaucrats. FATA's Wild West ecosystem is what enabled it to be used as a staging area for the mujahedeen who brought down the Soviet machine in the 1980s. Today, the urgency to resolve threats from FATA to US and Pakistani lives is real. That should not, however, cloud rational judgment. The mess has taken 150 years to create. It will not be cleaned up in accordance with the Obama administration's midterm election priorities. Nor will it follow the timetable Obama sets for Afghanistan. Pakistani reformers have been talking for years about the need to bring FATA under the country's Constitution. They've talked about better anti-terror legislation and dramatically higher funding for police and prosecution services. They've talked about a judiciary that is as active on terrorism as it is on other injustices in Pakistani society. The United States has been trying to invest in projects that will help Pakistan, through education, infrastructure and a more robust economy.

US assistance is a good thing, but it is not the silver bullet so many in the Obama administration think it is. It can complement Pakistani reform efforts, but it can't substitute for them. Trying to buy reform with US taxpayer money is not buying reform at all. It is buying the acquiescence of the Pakistani elite to gingerly get on board Gen. Stanley McChrystal's "clear, hold, build" counterinsurgency train. That train seems to be successful only in repeatedly clearing. Holding and building in FATA is a Pakistani responsibility. As long as the perverse incentives of money and General McChrystal's loving embrace continue to drive the US-Pakistan relationship, the Pakistani military and political elite will continue to shirk that responsibility. MOSHARRAF ZAIDI

Mosharraf Zaidi (mosharrafzaidi.com) writes regular columns for the News *(Pakistan) and* Al-Shorouk *(Egypt).*

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

The Sad Tale of Gordon Brown, Starting With The First Debate

The Labour leader Gordon Brown
Has got a frown of great renown.
He makes a strangely mirthless clown.
That combination brought him down.

America's Radical Roots

When Representative John Lewis said that "Barack Obama is what comes at the end of that bridge in Selma," he was conveying an important truth: America is a protest nation. From the Declaration of Independence to the 2008 presidential election, our politics and culture have been profoundly changed by small acts of protest and mass mobilizations. Dissent has come in a variety of forms—conservative and progressive, sweeping and incremental, violent and peaceful, individual and collective. Often, radicalism has drawn its inspiration from the founders' claims of liberty, equality and the rights of citizenship.

COMMENT

Still, to refer to someone as radical is to risk offense. Though the word can be reasonably defined as "going to the root of things," it is more commonly interpreted as "drastic" or "extreme." Radicals are those who decry the status quo, demand

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fundamental change. Such people almost always make others nervous—especially those in power. Without them, however, real change is much harder to achieve.

The past generation has been a fascinating period for historians of radicalism. Reckless Reaganomics paved the way for a disappointing decade of Clintonian compromise, flanked as it was by two Bush presidencies, the second much more awful than the first. Even in our most cynical imaginations, we could not have predicted that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 would be followed by two botched wars (one justified by lies), Guantánamo, legalized torture and the worst economic crisis since the Depression.

And yet somehow the Bush era failed to produce a countervailing progressive movement of the type that roiled America in the 1960s. The most conspicuous expression of radicalism now, the Tea Party movement, comes not from the left but from the far right. Inspired by the noisy rhetoric of media elites like Rush Limbaugh and his allies at Fox News, its rank and file embody a peculiar blend of nationalism and antigovernment conspiracy theories, evangelical fervor and xenophobic bigotry. They see an America that is changing rapidly—one where straight white men must learn to share power and social status with women, minorities and gays, and where the Oval Office is occupied by a man who is not only African-American but also cosmopolitan, intellectual, stylish and sophisticated. Frightened by these new realities, they carry signs that say, We Want Our Country Back.

In the face of all this, it is certainly easy to be pessimistic about the role that progressive radicalism might play in modern America. Look more carefully, though, and one can find evidence of a widening acceptance of the place of radicalism. In this respect, the 2008 election may have been a turning point, a profound cultural shift as well as a generational passing of the torch. Throughout the campaign, Obama's opponents tried to portray him as different, foreign or unacceptable in a host of ways. And while this smear campaign took on a predictable racial gloss, it was also an attempt to make him appear too radical by calling attention to his tenuous associations with an angry black minister, un-American education professor and foreign-born Muslims. The fact that Obama's candidacy survived these attacks says a great deal about his political skill, but it may also exemplify shifting perceptions of radicalism in our culture—our evolving ability to discern real threats from imagined ones.

The two of us have just published an anthology, *Protest Nation*, in which we present speeches, essays and manifestos from Upton Sinclair, Eugene Debs, Betty Friedan, Martin Luther King Jr., Rachel Carson, Noam Chomsky, Angela Davis, Harvey Milk and many others in order to illuminate the important role radicals have played in American history. It is our hope that the book will function as a field manual of sorts for progressive activists. Surrounded by teabaggers and terrorists, we also wanted to bring about a more charitable perception of radicalism by listing some of the things activists have achieved. They include: the American Revolution, the abolition of slavery, universal suffrage, public education, public parks, wildlife reserves, integration, coeducation, the eight-hour workday, collective bargaining, health and safety standards, child labor laws, reproductive choice, same-sex partner benefits, public health clinics and multicultural studies. It's an impressive (albeit incomplete) list, and it underscores the fact that America would be a far less decent and democratic place if not for the work of activists who have struggled to make real the country's founding promises of freedom and equality.

It is worth remembering how many of the things we take for granted have radical roots. It is also important to observe that in times of great crisis and repression, citizens may find it worthwhile to simply speak their minds, demand their rights and dream of a better world. As Margaret Mead exhorted: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Democracy is not inevitable. It cannot be imposed from on high or from afar; it must be generated from below. In these precarious times, we need to remember that liberty and equality have never been given freely or distributed equally—in the United States, or anywhere else.

TIMOTHY PATRICK McCARTHY AND JOHN McMILLIAN

Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John McMillian are the editors of Protest Nation: Words That Inspired a Century of American Radicalism, *just published by the New Press. McCarthy is a lecturer and director of the Human Rights and Social Movements Program at the Harvard Kennedy School. McMillian is an assistant professor of history at Georgia State University.*

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"Media Fix" blogger Greg Mitchell's new **Daybook** collects must-see headlines every morning and is updated each afternoon. Make it your first read.

Chatter about Elena Kagan, from the left and right, includes speculation about her sexual orientation. Leave her alone, writes Richard Kim in **Elena Kagan Is Not Gay**.

During the financial crisis, the Federal Reserve handed out $2 trillion in emergency loans and other goodies. In **Outing the Fed**, William Greider reports on Bernie Sanders and Ron Paul's proposal to force an audit of the central bank.

Mothers are wonders. But, writes Sharon Lerner in **The Gender Equality Bubble Goes Pop!**, they might prefer not to be giving quite so much—in fact, research suggests they're at the breaking point.

Born into the civil rights struggle, the actress and singer Lena Horne had a long and remarkable history as an activist who sacrificed for the struggle against segregation and economic injustice, writes John Nichols in **The Beat**.

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Katha Pollitt

What Ever Happened to Welfare Mothers?

Long lines of gloomy people in business suits at a jobs fair. Foreclosure signs on tidy suburban lawns. Adults moving into their parents' basement. In the news these days, the face of poverty is middle class, educated and often married: the hard-working, play-by-the-rules victims of the ongoing financial crisis. It's the man-bites-dog story that never ends.

But what about the people who already were poor before the crisis? Like women on welfare? Oh, them. The welfare reform bill, pompously titled the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) and signed by Bill Clinton in the run-up to the election, was supposed to pull these hapless folk off the dole with a mix of carrots and sticks aimed at forcing mothers off welfare and into the workforce. Not only would they find jobs that would allow them to support their children, the theory went; once single motherhood ceased to be subsidized by the taxpayer, poor women would settle down and marry before having kids. On its tenth anniversary PRWORA was widely trumpeted as a success: "Pragmatic progress," declared *Newsweek*'s Robert Samuelson. "Everything has worked," Douglas Besharov of the American Enterprise Institute told *USA Today*. "Welfare reform has been a triumph for the federal government and the states—and even more for single mothers," claimed Brookings Institution senior fellow Ron Haskins in its newsletter. On the *New York Times* op-ed page, Clinton patted himself on the back for a successful triangulation ("At the time, I was widely criticized by liberals who thought the work requirements too harsh and conservatives who thought the work incentives too generous") and for moving millions from "dependence to empowerment."

True, the widespread disaster—1.1 million newly poor children, for instance—predicted by some opponents did not come about: child poverty actually went down. Millions of welfare mothers found work, albeit often casual, low-wage jobs that did not lift them out of poverty. How much of a triumph is it that in the late 1990s, 65 percent of former recipients in South Carolina were working, earning an average hourly wage of $6? Or that in Maryland, in one quarter, about half of former recipients had found work at pay that annualized to roughly $9,500—way below the poverty line for an average family? In a New York City study I wrote about in February 1999, only 126 former recipients out of a sample of 569 even had valid phone numbers, hardly a sign of prosperity and stability; of the 126, 58 percent were supporting their families "mainly through work," and the median wage was $7.50.

But those women were entering the workforce at a moment of labor-force expansion and prosperity in the US economy; 16 million jobs were created in the 1990s. And even then—with a good jobs market, well-funded transitional programs and federal and state coffers flush with tax dollars—most welfare mothers stayed poor. Some, indeed, became poorer than ever, a development that tended to be briefly noted, if at all. As for the effects PRWORA was supposed to have on sexual mores, teen pregnancy did go down—but that happened for many reasons, and the United States is still way out in front of the other industrialized nations, including those with generous supports for young mothers and their children. Single motherhood continued to rise, accounting for 41 percent of all births in 2008, a historic high. Since single motherhood is rising all over the world, in countries from Ireland to Japan, it is not surprising that it has proved resistant to PRWORA's supposed miracle cure.

If the boom years failed to lift poor mothers into the middle class, how are they faring now that the middle class is becoming the new poor? The fact that the welfare rolls have risen less than 10 percent since December 2007 while food stamp use has soared by 40 percent—an amazing one in eight Americans now uses them—suggests that welfare isn't reaching poor families: either women who apply are being turned away, or the programs are so minimal, or so onerous, that people aren't signing up. How do they manage? Sharon Hays, author of *Flat Broke With Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*, writes in an e-mail, "They get by in the same way the poor of New Orleans and Haiti are getting by, by cobbling together every available source of aid and support, and then trying to learn how to adjust to constant suffering and insecurity. Increasing rates of domestic violence are just one hidden story here." And what about women who have reached their state's time limit—two years, three years, five years—and can't get welfare *for the rest of their lives*? Jane Collins, the author, with Victoria Mayer, of *Both Hands Tied: Welfare Reform and the Race to the Bottom of the Low-Wage Labor Market*, writes, "In Wisconsin, most people who have used up their time limits are simply out of luck."

Sounds like the laid-off workers for whom Congress recently capped unemployment benefits at ninety-nine weeks—but their situation, unlike that of welfare mothers, evokes widespread sympathy. No one sane assumes that today's unemployed are loafing, that jobs are "out there" for them or that getting married would solve their problems. If you think about it, though, given that PRWORA has been in effect for nearly fifteen years, it would not be difficult for a mother to reach the lifetime limit, even in Wisconsin, where it's a comparatively generous sixty months.

I asked Collins if she saw anything good in welfare reform. "It was always a stigmatized program, a football in racial politics. If it were possible to make unemployment and other entitlement programs gender sensitive—to take account of caregiving, for example, and the need for childcare—and put women into these mainstream programs instead of welfare, that would reconceive poor mothers as economic citizens, as workers with rights. And that would be good." But for that to happen, people would have to care. ■

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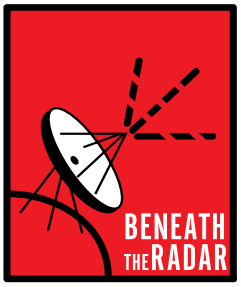
Gary Younge

Britain Braces for the Shocks to Come

For all the talk about Britain being on the threshold of a new politics, events following the recent election reached a somewhat familiar conclusion: a group of posh white guys thrashed it out in a room and then went to Buckingham Palace for the Queen's blessing.

The guys in question (and they really were all guys) were the Liberal Democrats, led by former *Nation* intern Nick Clegg, and the Conservatives, led by David Cameron, who after five days of haggling decided to form a coalition government.

Someone had to. For the first time in almost forty years, an election produced no clear winner. Indeed, each of the main parties lost in its own way. Despite the bad economy and a fractured government run by the most unpopular Labour leader in decades running the worst campaign, the Conservatives could not get a majority of the seats. The Liberal Democrats performed far worse than they and the pollsters had predicted and actually lost seats. Labour lost seats, vote share, power and its leader.



So now Cameron is prime minister and Clegg is his deputy. Whether this new government can last and for how long is an open question. They campaigned for different ends of the spectrum, with the Liberal Democrats at times to the left of Labour. Historically, their traditions are dissimilar but not antithetical.

When asked what blows governments, former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan once replied, "Events, dear boy, events."

Given the state of Britain's public finances, it is not difficult to foresee what will precipitate those events. The country is about to experience the most swingeing period of public spending cuts since World War II. The "short, sharp shock" that came to characterize the harshest years of Thatcherite Britain will now be overshadowed by another period of Conservative rule that promises to be longer, sharper and far more shocking.

The Tories want to make these cuts fast and deep. The new chancellor of the exchequer, George Osborne, has said he relishes the prospect. Whether the Tories' Liberal partners will stick by them when the going gets tough is unclear. What is clear is that the going will get very tough indeed.

Britain has a serious debt problem, principally from Labour's spending like a sailor without realizing that the ship was going down with the credit crunch. The annual budget deficit stands at 13 percent of gross domestic product, more than in Greece. Fortunately for Britain, the similarities stop there. Britain has less public debt, stronger economic growth, a dependable tax collection system, reliable economic statistics and—most important—its own currency and the ability to set its own exchange rates.

The truth is, none of the main parties have a mandate for these cuts because none were honest with the electorate about their plans for them. In a damning assessment released just a week before the election, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, an independent think tank, argued, "The opposition parties have not set out their fiscal targets clearly, and all three are particularly vague on their plans for public spending. The blame for that lies primarily with [the Labour] government for refusing to hold a spending review before the election." The IFS estimated that the Tories detailed less than 20 percent of the cuts they would need to fulfill their manifesto commitments, while the Liberals highlighted only a quarter.

The Conservative plan is not only unnecessary; it may well be counterproductive. There are several ways to skin a deficit that do not inflict maximum pain on the low-paid while cutting services to the needy. You can raise taxes on the wealthy, impose cuts over a longer period and print more money. Moreover, Britain has experienced a slower and more shallow recovery than most of the rest of Europe. The economy barely has a pulse. The Conservative proposals could kill it. Given the low growth and high unemployment rates, the threat of a deflationary spiral in Britain remains far greater than an inflationary one.

That there will be resistance to these cuts is beyond doubt. Strike activity was already growing under Labour and is bound to pick up pace now that the Conservatives are in charge. A *Financial Times*/Harris poll of swing constituencies before the election revealed that more than half the voters did not agree that the public sector should be cut back. Once the cuts arrive, that number is likely to grow. But what form the opposition will take, who will lead it and how much public support it will get remains to be seen.

Quite how Labour will perform in opposition is not yet clear. Like the Republicans here, Labour, having been in office for so long, will have little credibility when it comes to criticizing a new government on the economy. And given its past thirteen years of neoliberal orthodoxy, it will not be in any position to lead the fight.

While the British economic situation may not bear much resemblance to the one in Greece, the battle lines over the cuts ahead might. In all likelihood the fight over these cuts will not take place in Parliament but on the streets and in the markets. The markets will determine whether the scale and pace of the cuts are sufficient (with the ratings agencies waiting in the wings), and the unions and others will shape the resistance to them. Since Britain's economic situation is not as dire and its political culture not as militant, these confrontations will likely be less intense.

Shortly before the election, the governor of the Bank of England was overheard saying the measures necessary to implement the impending austerity will be so tough and unpopular that "whoever wins this election will be out of power for a whole generation."

Let's hope he's right but that a generation of Britons don't lose their livelihoods in the process. ■

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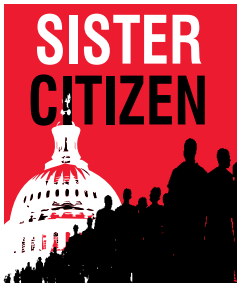
Melissa Harris-Lacewell

Believing in Justice, Blaming the Victim

The news cycle in early May seemed to portend Armageddon. I noticed the psychological impact of the bad news among my heartiest, most hopeful progressive intimates. My mother is having nightmares about the incalculable impact of the BP oil disaster on the Gulf Coast. Having survived Hurricane Katrina, my friend could not bear to watch coverage of the Nashville floods. My own heart raced when I thought of how often I have stood at the corner of Forty-fifth and Seventh in New York City, where Faisal Shahzad allegedly attempted to detonate a car bomb. Evening news typically trends toward the negative and alarming, but in the wake of the Haitian and Chilean earthquakes, the continuing unemployment woes and the deepening foreclosure crisis, these recent stories of disasters, terrorist plots, European economic catastrophe and Wall Street roller coasters seem particularly jarring. Together they are a reminder of our staggering collective vulnerability.



These events reveal the inherent limitations of our technology, our prosperity and our government solutions. They remind us that despite tremendous progress and best intentions, we live in a contingent and often frightening world. This sense of vulnerability has political consequences. Progressives often accuse the right of using these news cycles to stoke fear, mobilize the uninformed and win battles by terrifying the public. Undoubtedly there's some fear-baiting in the Tea Party panic over higher taxes even when most Americans received a tax cut; the racist Arizona anti-immigrant law, based in anxiety about low-wage competition; and the white-knuckled panic that equal rights for homosexuals will unravel the nation's social fabric.

But the effects of heightened vulnerability are not exclusive to the right. During the 2008 campaign Barack Obama declared an end to the politics of fear, offering instead a politics of hope. His campaign rhetoric was steeped in a triumphant American narrative about a historical arc that bends always toward justice. He recalled the end of slavery, the growing equality of women and the triumph of civil rights. Candidate Obama encouraged Americans to rest assured that despite inevitable challenges, the world was basically a fair and just place. He promised that it was safe to be hopeful and asserted, "Yes we can." While this optimism was a clear rebuttal to the fear-based politics of the Bush administration, it also held some potential dangers. There is some evidence that believing in the fundamental fairness of the world can lead to surprisingly conservative reactions in moments of disaster and suffering.

When faced with the circumstances that reveal human vulnerability, people have two choices: they can determine that the world is an unjust place, or they can decide that the victims must somehow be responsible for their suffering. Decades of psychological research have found that those most attached to the idea of a just world become most cognitively frustrated when they are presented with stories of victims who suffer through little fault of their own. In an unexpected twist, those most attached to the belief that the world is fair are those most likely to reconcile their distress about unearned suffering by blaming the victims. Even when we know that suffering is undeserved, it is psychologically easier to find a way to blame the victim rather than give up the idea that the world is basically fair.

In one set of studies, subjects viewed a videotape of people learning a task. In one scenario the learners were punished for incorrect answers with simulated electric shocks. In another scenario learners were simply told that their answers were wrong. Subjects expressed much lower opinions of those who were "shocked," even though they did not get any more answers wrong. When there was no possibility of the victim finding relief from the ordeal, or when the victim voluntarily remained in the painful experiment, the subjects decided that the victim deserved the treatment he was receiving. When the idea of justice and fairness is threatened by the suffering of innocent victims, people will work hard to maintain a sense of balance even if that means rationalizing that innocent people deserved to suffer.

The belief in a just world can act as a psychological distortion encouraging support of political agendas focused on individual effort rather than structural change—like blaming the poor for having an insufficient work ethic. Fear leads us to imagine that we can build walls that will keep out all enemies (like along the Mexican border); discover technology that allows us to tap all resources without danger (offshore drilling); pursue wealth that will never incur losses (Wall Street speculation); or craft an America that never changes. But we cannot replace fear with blind assertions of justice. Hope is a powerful electoral elixir, but the heroic narrative that things always get better can leave progressives feeling cynical and confused when faced with tragedy and defenselessness.

The problem of maintaining faith in the face of undeserved suffering is a central problem of world religions. It is also a secular political problem. We must find a way to live together and to govern ourselves despite the fact that as fragile human beings we are subject to indifferent and sometimes malevolent forces more powerful than we are. For progressives I believe this means finding responsible ways to embrace the realities of vulnerability while working to address the impact of injustice.

In the psychological studies, respondents reacted differently when they were offered a way to compensate the victims of injustice. People felt little need to denigrate them and instead were able to make the world seem fair again through their own actions to alleviate suffering. In these results there may be a lesson for progressive politics. We are better able to cope with our frailty when we get to work on behalf of fairness. The point is not to assert that the world is just, but to help make it so. ■

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SHAKEUP IN THE UK

D.D. GUTTENPLAN & MARIA MARGARONIS

London

Be careful what you wish for. On May 7 Britain woke up to a hung Parliament—the dream of center-left politicians here since Nick Clegg was in diapers. Here at last was the chance for Labour and the Liberal Democrats to form an alliance that would ditch Britain's winner-take-all electoral system, replacing it with a more proportional arrangement that would reflect the country's longstanding center-left majority, freezing out the Conservatives for a generation. Instead Clegg (a former *Nation* intern) took his party into government with the Tories, serving as deputy prime minister to David Cameron, a politician he'd called "the con man of British politics." Where did it all go wrong?

Part of the problem was numerical: though Labour and the Lib Dems together won 52 percent of the votes, their combined seats left them short of a majority. But politics was probably more decisive. Though both main parties played to the center, Britain, like the United States, is a deeply polarized society. Take a close look at the election results, and the mirage of a stable center-left consensus melts away to reveal a country deeply riven not just by party but by region, gender and class. The Tories remain the party of wealth, aspiration and home ownership; Labour is still the party of the unions, the public sector and the poor.

The Tories may be dominant in England, but in Scotland, where the threat of a Tory government brought both Lib Dem and Scottish Nationalist voters back to Labour in droves, they managed only a single MP. Coalitions are a messy business, and while Cameron—and Clegg—could bring their parties with them, Labour's Gordon Brown could not: Scottish Labour MPs wanted no part of a deal with Lib Dems or the Scottish National Party. Nor did many on Labour's left, who apparently feared marginalization in government more than a spell in opposition. Labour did well among women under 35, and unskilled and low-income workers. But the Tories made gains among skilled workers and the lower middle class—parts of old Labour's base who have good reason to feel neglected by New Labour. Dependent on the state for education and healthcare, with their savings locked up in houses whose value has been wiped out by the credit crunch, these are the voters whose resentments have been channeled into the issue of immigration.

We spent the day before the election in Dagenham, a mostly white working-class suburb east of London. The Ford plant here once employed 40,000 people, and the Becontree Estate's council homes formed a stable working-class community. But in the 1980s Thatcher's government sold half the houses to tenants, who then moved on, leaving the estate to the most disadvantaged. In 2002 Ford Dagenham stopped producing cars, laying off all but 4,000 of its workers. Becontree's main avenues still look neat and clean, but turn down a side street and you're in a different world: apartment blocks with no locks on the doors, stairwells stinking of urine, concrete crazed with weeds and people home all day. Dagenham, says Nick Lowles of the antifascist Hope Not Hate campaign, is one of Britain's fastest-changing communities. The cheapest housing in London attracts recent immigrants; some of the old white working class draw a straight line from their new neighbors to their own sense of abandonment. Jon Cruddas, Dagenham's left-wing Labour MP and a possible candidate for the party leadership, held his seat against a Tory challenger, though his share of the vote dropped by 8.9 percent. Most of the votes he lost went to the fascist British National Party.

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Immigration (a topic only Clegg addressed with any candor) is the meat and potatoes of Britain's right-wing press, which rapidly closed ranks against a possible Labour/Lib Dem coalition. "This shabby stitch-up," howled the *Daily Express*; "a squalid day for democracy," scolded the *Daily Mail*; "a very Labour coup," complained the *Telegraph* when Brown resigned to pave the way for a deal. Though constitutional precedent gives the incumbent administration first crack at forming a government if no party wins a majority, even the BBC's supposedly neutral reporters expressed incredulity at what they repeatedly called "a coalition of the losers." Democratic debate is skewed by this baseline badgering, some of it fueled by Rupert Murdoch, who backed Blair in the past but this time went all-in behind Cameron. Murdoch wants a Tory government to rein in the BBC, chief rival to his Sky broadcasting; with the Tories in power, his hold over British politics will be much stronger.

In any normal European country, an interval of days or weeks between an election and the formation of a new coalition is no cause for alarm. In Britain, though, any departure from a morning-after changing of the guard feels like a crisis—especially with the jittery financial markets hovering over this election. In a private conversation that quickly went viral, Mervyn King, governor of the Bank of England, told American economist David Hale that "whoever wins this election will be out of power for a whole generation because of how tough the fiscal austerity will have to be." The BBC's election coverage paused at intervals to take sterling's temperature; reports on the parties' talks were accompanied by ominous rumbling about the markets' response. Analysts at BNP Paribas advised investors to sell the pound as the chances of a Lib/Lab deal increased: "A Labour/Liberal government…would almost guarantee a downgrade of the UK sovereign…since both parties agree that early expenditure cuts could harm the economy." The pound bounced up again the minute the *Evening Standard* claimed that talks with Labour had collapsed. In other words, if Britain dares to flirt with Keynesianism or hesitates to implement a deflationary policy, "the markets" will dump the pound and raise the interest on its sovereign debt—just as they did in Greece, used as a boogeyman to scare voters during the campaign.

With such constraints, what price democracy? The impasse that appears as a problem of the voting system reflects a deeper crisis of legitimacy decades in the making. The deregulation of the City launched by Thatcher and embraced by Brown produced twenty years of boom that turned to bubble, leaving politics prey to the financiers' whims. Globalization brought prosperity but also immiseration, destroying the communities where Labour once had roots. The new, fluid, market-style politics of triangulation and focus groups shot New Labour to power under Blair, to whom both Clegg and Cameron owe their style. It was on Labour's watch that politicians finally lost their claim to the voters' respect and trust. Blair's "sofa administration," in which decisions were made by unelected advisers; the Iraq War, pushed through Parliament with the aid of dodgy dossiers; last year's expenses scandal, which revealed the fantastic sums politicians of all parties had nicked from the public purse—all these contributed to the three-week eruption of "Cleggmania," the fantasy of a politician who, by talking straight and waving the magic wand of electoral reform, could restore the public's faith in its creaking institutions.

As it turned out, the Lib Dems did far less well at the polls than predicted: in the solitude of the voting booth, people went back to the parties they knew and understood. But because neither Labour nor the Conservatives won a majority of seats in the House of Commons, Clegg was left in the impossible role of kingmaker, trying to square his role as an advocate for a more democratic politics with his power to install the next government through backroom horse trading.

Clegg turned first to the Tories—a move dictated by electoral arithmetic, and Clegg's own statement that whichever party did best in the polls deserved a chance to form a government. The two parties soon found common ground on education, civil liberties (dumping Labour's detested ID cards) and the environment, though not on the Lib Dems' key demand for electoral reform. Brown's announcement that he would step down brought Clegg's back-channel negotiations with Labour into the open, raising last-minute hopes that the progressive coalition might yet come to pass. But while history and chemistry favored a deal between Labour and the Lib Dems, the parliamentary math was against them—as was the fact that such an arrangement would have installed a second unelected Labour prime minister. At the last minute Cameron was even able to offer a referendum on a fairer electoral system—and bring his party with him (though with no promise that the Tories would vote in favor). When it came to the moment of truth, Labour turned out to have no stomach for the long-imagined "dream team." Former cabinet ministers decried the negotiations on TV; MPs railed that the pact that would not hold—even that it would complete the Blairite project of destroying Labour's left.

So Britain has its first coalition government since Winston Churchill's war cabinet, led by its nineteenth Old Etonian prime minister. The Liberal Democrats have won key posts and policies. In the process, though, they may have sold their souls. Left voters who flirted with the fantasy of a radical alternative will go running home to Labour. Tainted by the coming cuts, which they will have to support and Labour can now oppose, the Lib Dems may find that the Holy Grail of proportional representation remains beyond their reach. The past few days have been a lousy advertisement for a system that lets small parties hold the rest to ransom.

While Clegg may have risen to acclaim as the would-be savior of democratic values, his actions since the election have exposed a democratic deficit running deep beneath British politics. Those protesters in suffrage purple who chanted "Fair votes now" and "Don't sell out" at Clegg over the weekend need to acknowledge the more powerful forces holding democracy hostage. Standing for the second-to-last time outside 10 Downing Street, Gordon Brown identified the two issues facing the country: economic recovery and electoral reform. No politician has begun to talk about how the two might be linked. ■

D.D. Guttenplan and Maria Margaronis write from The Nation*'s London bureau.*

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Notice of Class Action, Proposed Class Settlement and Hearing
***Barham, et al., v. Ramsey, et al.*, Case No. 02-CV-02283 (EGS)(JMF)**

If you were arrested in Pershing Park on September 27, 2002 in Washington, D.C. in connection with the IMF / World Bank related demonstrations, you could receive up to $18,000 from a class action settlement

Class Counsel are the attorneys of the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund

A settlement has been proposed in a class action lawsuit about the illegality of the arrests of approximately 400 protesters and others **in Pershing Park** on Friday, September 27, 2002 in Washington, D.C. Many of those arrested were surrounded by police in the park, moved onto mass arrest busses, were in custody including overnight, and were restrained wrist-to-ankle with plastic "flexcuffs."

Who's Included?

The class is "all persons who were arrested in Pershing Park in the District of Columbia on September 27, 2002." **There were protest-related arrests elsewhere on September 27, 2002 that are the subject of other suits. This settlement pertains only to the Pershing Park arrests.**

What is Proposed?

The proposed settlement will provide up to $18,000 per class member in compensation. Attorneys fees will be paid separately and will not be deducted from this amount. In addition, the arrests of class members will be expunged and declared legally null and void. The class has demanded and the D.C. Government has agreed to and has imposed, substantial equitable relief and/or restrictions on police conduct to prevent recurrence.

Your legal rights are affected whether you act, or don't act. **Strict deadlines will apply**.

Submit a Proof of Claim Form	The only way to get a payment. **Deadline: July 15, 2010**
Exclude Yourself	Get no payment. This is the only option that allows you to ever be part of any other lawsuit about the legal claims in this case. **Deadline: July 15, 2010**
Object	Write to the Court about why you don't like the settlement. **Deadline: July 15, 2010**
Go to a Hearing	Ask to speak in Court about the fairness of the settlement. **Fairness Hearing: September 17, 2010 at 10:00 a.m., Courtroom 24A, United States District Court for the District of Columbia, 333 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.** **Judge Emmet G. Sullivan presiding.**
Do Nothing	Get no payment. Give up rights.

Getting More Information

This is a summary notice. More details are in the detailed class notice and the Settlement Agreement. You can get a copy of the forms and case documents and get more information:

on the internet at **www.PershingParkSettlement.com**

by calling (toll-free) **1-877-678-0736**

or by writing to Barham v. Ramsey Settlement, c/o Gilardi & Co. LLC, PO Box 8060, San Rafael, CA 94912-8060

www.PershingParkSettlement.com
1-877-678-0736

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Aiding the Insurgency

A celebrated US program designed to employ Iraqis is called a "sham" that fed the resistance.

by LUKE MOGELSON

IGOR KOPELNITSKY

Last summer the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) closed one of its largest projects in Iraq, declaring that it had been a virtually unqualified success. The Community Stabilization Program (CSP), which cost $675 million over its three years of operation, has been lauded as one of the war's most effective counter-insurgency operations. Launched in May 2006, it was USAID's chief contribution to the Bush plan of rescuing a tailspinning military adventure with a civilian surge and increased focus on economic development. "Bottom line: it worked," said Jeanne Pryor, USAID's deputy director for Iraq reconstruction, during a recent colloquy on the CSP at the United States Institute of Peace. An evaluator contracted by USAID recommended that the CSP be replicated elsewhere, and in Afghanistan recent cash-for-work projects have emerged that appear to be based on the model it pioneered.

According to several senior military and government personnel, however, this vaunted program was responsible for sending millions of taxpayer dollars to Iraqi insurgents via a complex web of contractors and subcontractors. These sources claim that although USAID was fully aware of the problem, it delayed acting for as long as possible, unwilling to pull the plug on a program that generated propitious statistics, even when it jeopardized American lives.

When George W. Bush unveiled his "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" in November 2005, the approach—summarized as "clear, hold and build"—called for exactly the kind of work USAID had been doing for decades. The CSP was similar to past undertakings in that it sought to create jobs and engage youth; it was unique, however, in that it concentrated on fighting-age males vulnerable to recruitment by insurgents. Almost all USAID projects are administered through intermediaries—either private firms or nonprofits—and this one was no different. The cooperative agreement went to International Relief and Development (IRD), an American nonprofit run by a minister in the United Church of Christ.

As with most USAID "implementing partners" in Iraq and Afghanistan, IRD delegated much of its authority to local subcontractors; in the case of the CSP, this meant paying Iraqis to hire other Iraqis to clear streets of rubble and trash. The upshot was that money had to pass through several middlemen before reaching its intended target, flowing from USAID to IRD to IRD subcontractors—to sub-subcontractors sometimes, sub-sub-subcontractors other times—to young men at risk of joining the insurgency. On paper the scheme was successful. By the summer of 2007, IRD was not only meeting its employment goals; it was far exceeding them. The problem was that the reports belied rather than reflected reality.

"It was just a sham," says retired Lt. Col. Felix Boston, a member of a provincial reconstruction team deployed to Baghdad's Kadhimiya district, a Shiite stronghold ruled by various militias, including Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army. Civil conflict was uncommon in Kadhimiya—its Sunni population had been decimated, with many people fleeing or killed by Shiite death squads after the fall of Saddam. But the militias that found safe haven there were still active in the insurgency, and USAID hoped to lure potential recruits away by enlisting them in the trash campaigns. Time sheets submitted to IRD by Kadhimiya contractors listed thousands of Iraqis, each receiving wages from USAID. But according to several embedded provincial reconstruction team members, many of these workers were phantoms, never seen by the US Army's Dagger Brigade during its regular patrols of the area. "The numbers were so inflated," says Boston. "They'd say 5,000, and there might have been a hundred people."

That contractors were not employing anywhere near the number of men they claimed to be was less worrisome than where the money went. Col. Louis Fazekas, a senior governance adviser to Baghdad's *beladiya*, or city planners, attended many of the meetings where contract recipients were nominated by local Neighborhood Advisory Councils (NACs). "Basically, we looked at the local council leaders like contract brokers," he says. Intelligence reports made available to Colonel Fazekas indicated that the council in Kadhimiya was directing some contracts to militia members and that additional militia members were extorting "protection" bribes from legitimate contract winners. "We saw reports that a particular contractor was being blackmailed for a thousand dollars a day," Fazekas says. "It was feeding [the insurgents'] ability to continue to resupply and fight against us."

On September 1, 2007, the commander of the Dagger Brigade encouraged John Crihfield, a USAID representative, to send a letter to David Soroko, then head of the CSP. The letter described the fraud in Kadhimiya, adding this dark assessment: "The dire consequence is that American soldiers are killed attempting to secure areas being destabilized in part by misdirected American dollars." Shortly thereafter Fazekas

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met with Soroko to make the same argument in person. Soroko, he says, "basically said, 'Talk to our lawyers. We're not going to do anything about it.'" Fazekas added, "His reports looked good, and he got lots of numbers, and [IRD] was meeting his goals."

John Bennett, a former US ambassador who led the provincial reconstruction team in Kadhimiya in 2007, is blunt about what he sees as the price of Soroko's decision. "We were losing soldiers," he wrote in an e-mail. "He was managing a program that, I believe, contributed to this." Soroko is no longer with USAID. After returning from Iraq he worked at IRD, heading its economic growth and trade office. He has declined to comment.

About a week after Soroko sent out an e-mail notifying his staff of the letter from Kadhimiya and explaining that there was insufficient evidence to justify taking action, Jay Rollins, a USAID regional inspector general, began a routine audit of the CSP. Despite agency policy mandating employees to report promptly any complaint relating to waste, fraud, abuse or corruption, during Rollins's initial briefing in Baghdad no one from USAID mentioned the situation in Kadhimiya. Nonetheless, after interviewing Dagger Brigade intelligence officers, Rollins learned of the problems Fazekas had reported, and infantry soldiers responsible for security in Kadhimiya confirmed the allegations. "We can't say that no work got done. But we can say that some of these contracts recorded that they had, say, 300 employees working to clean up a neighborhood," Rollins says. "And when we talked to the American troops who patrol those neighborhoods on a daily basis, they would say there's no way that 300 people were out there collecting trash. They would know if a dozen people came into the neighborhood, let alone 300." Rollins's subsequent review of IRD documents determined that many of the trash-campaign time sheets were computer-generated, mass-produced and clearly forged.

While IRD maintains that it was unaware that the time sheets it received were bogus, Rollins says, "I can't say that they were [aware]. I can say that they should have been, because some of the contracts we looked at that were in IRD's possession were obviously fabricated."

Toward the end of November 2007, at Rollins's urging, Crihfield, the USAID representative previously rebuffed by Soroko, sent a second letter, this time to Christopher Crowley, USAID's mission director for Iraq. The letter—obtained by *The Nation* through the Freedom of Information Act—presented new "sensitive and disturbing information from a well-placed source" advising that as much as 40 to 50 percent of CSP funds in Kadhimiya had gone to insurgents and corrupt officials. "Our interlocutor," wrote Crihfield, "who is favorably known to us and who we believe is in a position to become aware of the information, told us that millions of dollars from IRD's cleaning campaigns in [Kadhimiya] are going to 'insurgents' and to corrupt NAC and IRD representatives."

Five days later, USAID halted all activities in the district. Rollins believes this would not have happened had his office not become involved. USAID has declined to explain why it didn't discontinue the campaigns until he became involved.

Rollins's final audit concluded that the CSP was highly vulnerable to fraud and exploitation, and proposed fourteen specific fixes. In what amounted to a wholesale repudiation of those findings, Crowley responded with a statement that questioned whether there had been any foul play at all. "While such fraud and exploitation may or may not have occurred," he wrote, "the audit report cites what is a series of unsubstantiated anecdotes." (In fact, the extensive intelligence reports Rollins and his team analyzed did substantiate the allegations, but they were classified and therefore prohibited from inclusion in an unclassified audit.) Perhaps the most critical of Rollins's recommendations was that USAID evaluate CSP activities elsewhere in Baghdad to determine whether they suffered from similar problems and should also be suspended. Crowley not only rejected this suggestion; he argued that it should be deleted from the public draft.

Congress was less dismissive. In its next supplemental appropriations bill, 50 percent of CSP funding was tied to the condition that USAID institute Rollins's recommendations. Such Congressional involvement is rare; during his twenty-year career Rollins has never seen anything like it. Speculating why USAID had been so resistant to improving the CSP, he says, "That would be an admission that the program had some serious flaws." Like USAID, IRD insists that the program was successful and refuses to acknowledge the possibility of fundamental systemic problems. Its incentives for doing so are considerable. About 90 percent of IRD's revenue comes from USAID, for which it currently manages three major programs in Afghanistan, one of which provides temporary employment for young Afghan men through short-term public works projects.

> The program was not only meeting its employment goals; it was far exceeding them. But the reports belied rather than reflected the reality.

Precisely how much money went to the insurgency remains unknown. Occupation business has been conducted largely in cash. All told, $12 billion—some 240 tons of bills—has been shrink-wrapped and shipped to Baghdad from the Federal Reserve Bank in New York City. At its height the CSP was disbursing $1 million a day. "They would bring in money on pallets," says Colonel Boston. "Where does that money go?"

In *Hard Lessons*, an exhaustive government appraisal of Iraq War tactics, the funding of insurgents in Kadhimiya is described as "the worst fear of any development officer, and also an inevitable risk of pushing large sums of money into a warzone." But maybe pushing CSP money into Kadhimiya in the first place was not inevitable. Both Fazekas and Bennett, the leader of the provincial reconstruction team in Kadhimiya,

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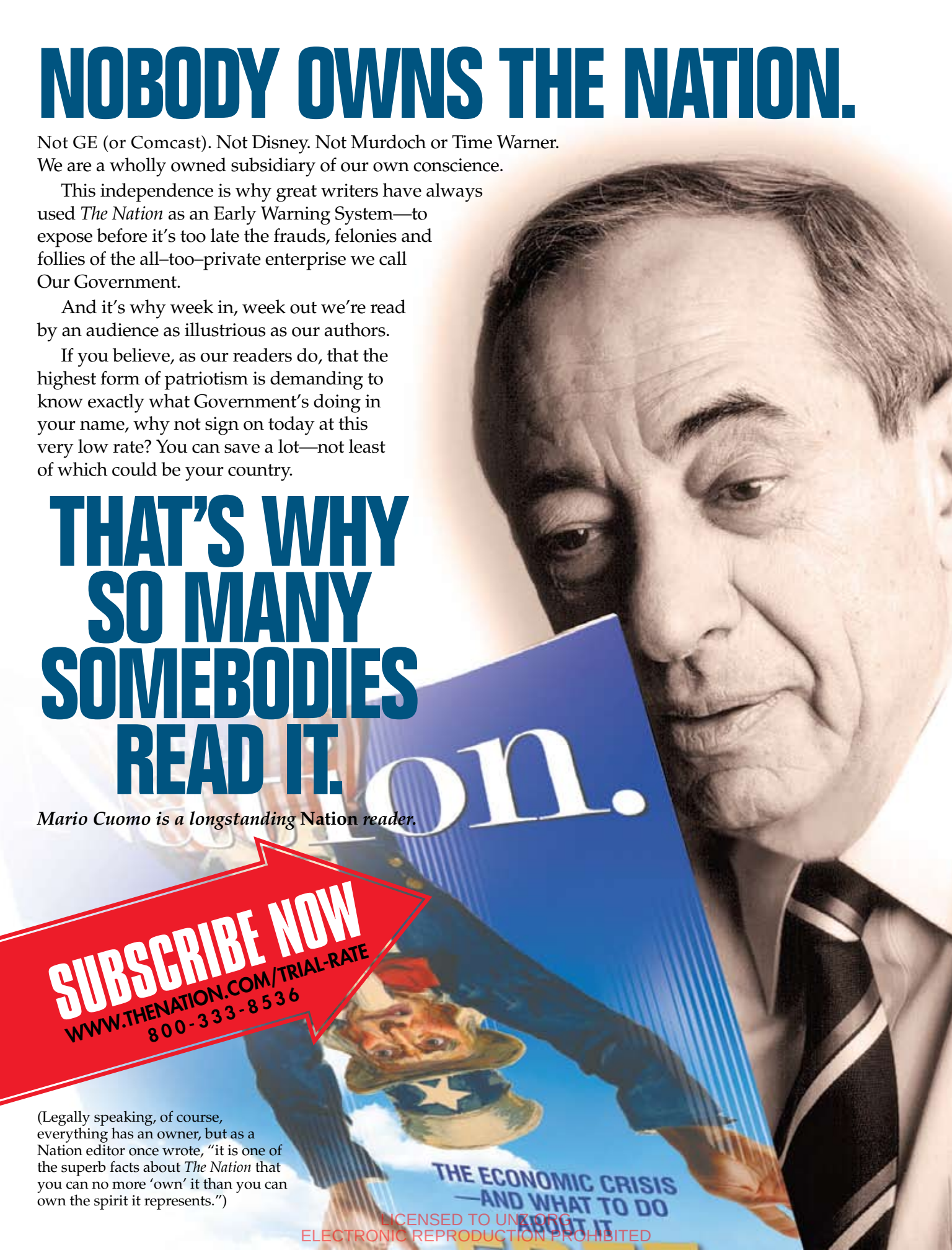

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advocated removing USAID from the equation altogether by transferring responsibility for the trash campaigns to Iraq's department of public works (a suggestion to which USAID was predictably opposed). As Bennett saw it, "If the department of public works picked up the trash, there would be nothing in it for the bad guys. But if they could keep the department of public works out and the private contractors in, they could squeeze the private contractors for a percentage of the income."

This points to a troubling overlap between the interests of the "bad guys" and those of USAID and its implementing partners. But Fazekas says that aside from potentially benefiting US adversaries, such reluctance to cede control of programs also undermines the governments the United States is supposedly working to legitimize. "What we were doing in Iraq was setting up parallel institutions," he says. "We were there to help existing institutions get back on their feet. The only way you do that is to buy into them from the very beginning. Don't create a new one."

During her glowing assessment of the CSP at the US Institute of Peace in November, Jeanne Pryor, the USAID deputy director for Iraq reconstruction, recited a litany of statistics and pointed out that the daily disbursement of CSP funds in Iraq often exceeded what entire countries receive from USAID in one year. The next speaker was Rend al-Rahim, a former Iraqi ambassador to the United States, who has also worked as a subcontractor for USAID. "I truly question the value of a project which insists so emphatically on numbers, on output," Rahim said. "In the end, what is left? What is the residual value of what is being done?" Rahim was incredulous over claims that the CSP had trained 207,000 Iraqi youths. "Really?" she asked. "What is the quality of that training—when you insist on numbers?"

In his final audit, Inspector General Rollins recounts being told by a CSP official that USAID and the military were "pushing" for job creation, and Fazekas suggests a resolve on IRD's part to satisfy that expectation, regardless of what was actually happening. "Their whole thing was numbers," Fazekas says. "'We've hired X number of males between this age and this age.'" While militia members and insurgents may have fed fraudulent time sheets to IRD, they were at least patently fraudulent and made no pretense of truth. But IRD then fed those numbers to USAID, USAID fed them to the American people and eventually, inevitably, Ambassador Ryan Crocker fed them to Congress. It was less than two weeks after Soroko chose to ignore the alarming letter from Kadhimiya that Crocker appeared before the House and Senate to warn against a troop withdrawal and point out, among other gains, that CSP funds provided tens of thousands of jobs. Somewhere along the way the forged signatures had become real signatures; the phantom workers had become flesh-and-blood workers, young Iraqi men persuaded by American generosity not to fight us—an indicator of progress in a winnable war. ■

Retaking Rio

With the Olympics coming to town, the state seeks to reclaim the *favelas*.

by CHRISTIAN PARENTI

Rio de Janeiro

The black police helicopter floats above Rio. Ahead of us looms the huge mountaintop statue of Christ, arms outstretched to the city; below us lies the long, wide expanse of Ipanema Beach. Inland from the posh neighborhoods on the water rise abrupt mountains of solid rock topped by lush jungle. Stacked up haphazardly along these steep slopes are the *favelas*: the densely packed unplanned neighborhoods of the poor and working classes.

If the contrast of white beaches and dark mountains defines Rio's postcard-perfect geography, it is the surreal inequality of luxury condos overlooked by impoverished slums that defines Rio's social landscape. Originally built by squatters from the rural northeast, and named for a hardy weed of that region, the poverty- and crime-plagued *favelas* are the open sore on Rio's welcoming smile.

AP PHOTO/SILVIA IZQUIERDO

Military police officers patrol the Complexo de Alemão *favela* in Rio.

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The police are giving me an airborne tour of the city and explaining how the state, long absent from the *favelas*, is planning to reimpose order through an ambitious "pacification" campaign. Despite a multifaceted security crisis, Rio will host the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. "The state is going back to occupy territories from which it was absent, both in terms of public security and in terms of social investment," says State Governor Sérgio Cabral.

As we approach Favela Vidigal, the pilot steers the chopper out over the water in a wide defensive arch. Vidigal is "hostile," under the control of the Comando Vermelho (CV), one of Rio's gangs, and known to shoot at police helicopters. The cocky young pilot, wearing a blue jumpsuit and dark shades, made sure to point out three freshly patched bullet holes near its tail rotor just before we took off. (Damage the tail rotor, and the chopper spins out of control.)

Despite police brutality, many residents—those with stable jobs or who own property—are happy about the changes.

In October gunmen from the drug gangs shot down a police helicopter. It was part of a daylong firefight between two rival gang factions and the police, in which three officers were killed and four were badly injured. Twelve civilians—gangsters and bystanders—were also killed. In the surrounding area young men firebombed ten buses. It all happened just a mile from the stadium that will host the World Cup final and the Olympic ceremonies.

The gangs of Rio run the *favelas* and much of the city's retail drug trade. Inside the communities they carry machine guns openly, as if they were the police; tax local economic activity; and operate informal courts that mete out justice. In one case, they shot a 14-year-old girl through the hands and feet because she stole a cellphone. More often they simply execute people accused of snitching, stealing or causing trouble. The gangs have killed journalists, and their turf battles account for much of the murder rate in Rio. Roughly the size of New York, Rio has a murder rate six times higher. In 2009 about 5,000 people were killed here.

Typically, the police enter the *favelas* only for short and brutal raids—arriving at night in armed columns to ransack, torture and kill. For the most part, they have not established police stations. According to a 2009 Human Rights Watch report, the Rio constabulary kill more than 1,100 people every year. Only four Rio police officers have been convicted of abuses in the past decade, but Rio's cops face other risks: almost ninety died in the line of duty last year.

If that weren't enough, now a third source feeds the violence: off-duty police, firefighters and prison guards have formed illegal militias to check the gangs. But these vigilantes can be just as criminal as their enemies. In 2008 such militias even tortured journalists from the city's biggest newspaper.

The state's pacification plan aims to quell all this mayhem and restore law and order, at least in the crucial Zona Sul area of the city, where the games will be held. The plan runs as follows: first, Rio's military police special forces—known by their Portuguese acronym, BOPE—will invade the *favelas* and suppress the gangs. Then regular military police units will establish permanent bases and begin patrols. Once an area is secured, government services—such as healthcare, education, cultural facilities and civil courts—will be moved in. (Yes, it does sound like the Afghanistan strategy of "secure and hold.")

So far, ten of Rio's roughly 1,000 *favelas* are undergoing pacification. By the time the World Cup begins, 100 communities are supposed to have permanent police stations and a bevy of new public services. And, perhaps because there will be general elections this October, politicians appear to be making a genuine effort to get resources into these communities.

Despite serious and ongoing police brutality, many residents—those with stable jobs outside the *favelas* or who own property that might become more valuable if crime decreases—are happy about the changes. Others, like many young people, the extremely poor, the extended families of powerful underworld figures, are not so happy. Most of all, the gangs are not pleased. And in some cases they are taking revenge on the larger society, occasionally firebombing commuter buses down on "the pavement," as non-*favela* Rio is called.

The contradictions of the occupations—which pivot on class divisions within the communities—were evident when I visited the recently pacified *favela* of Tabajaras de Botafogo in late February. To tour the place, I met the president of the residents' association, Cláudio Carvalho. Every *favela* has one of these organizations, which generally started in the 1960s to agitate for rights and services. These days the associations exist in varying degrees of autonomy from the gangs: some are merely the political face of the criminals; others are genuine community organizations.

"The old residents' association was corrupt," says Cláudio. "The man who ran it turned it into a private business. We are rehabilitating the association because we want this community to have services."

Did the association collaborate with the gangs before they were driven out? "Whoever has the guns is the law," says Cláudio cryptically. For years this *favela* was subject to a constant struggle between the CV and a rival gang, Amigo dos Amigos. "When one of theirs was wounded, they would dump the guy—bleeding, half dead—at the association, and we were expected to take them to the hospital."

When I visited, police had occupied the community for about a week. "When the BOPE came in, there was excessive brutality," Cláudio explains. Now officers carrying machine guns have a checkpoint at the *favela*'s entrance and patrol its maze of hillside paths and stairways. Thus far the residents have not received any new services along with the police crackdown. In fact, about 100 families have had their water cut off.

Living at the top of a ridge, these households had tapped into the water mains of a nearby housing development. (That's how Rio is: battleground slums can be wedged against a huge lush national park or gated condos.) Now that the cops have

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cleared out the CV, the owner of the middle-class apartment buildings wants the pirate customers in the *favela* to pay up.

In a misting rain, Cláudio and I hike up a long staircase toward the waterless homes. At our feet, gray sewage water trickles down the gutter; above sags a tangle of jerry-built wires for power, telephone and cable TV. Some side paths lead off into tight wedges of squalor and menace. Others reveal scenes of tidy domestic bliss. My guide points to bullet holes here and there; and farther up on the ridge, in a wall marking the edge of the community, are a few crude openings where CV gunmen knocked out bricks to make secure firing positions from which to shoot out upon a nearby road.

For the 'dangerous classes' of the young and unemployed, occupation means constant searches, shakedowns and possible beatings.

At the top of the *favela* we meet Jose Louis and his sister Solange. They live with Jose's wife, and they haven't had water for a few days. Both are squat and pale. His name and his looks are Spanish. Jose works as a porter in an open-air market downtown.

"I'll pay a little for water. That's fine as long as it is reasonable. It is the price of peace," says Jose. "They have to keep this occupation. It has been wonderful." Soon I can understand why: he wants to sell the solid whitewashed cottage he built on squatted land, which he now owns, thanks to recent urban land reform. He thinks he can get $50,000 for it. But if the gangs return, Jose's home will again be engulfed in the endless war among factions of nihilistic and heavily armed teenagers.

In Dona Marta, the first *favela* occupied, back in November 2008, and said to be a showcase of social programs, I meet a group of unemployed young people. They may or may not be enrolled foot soldiers of the CV, but they see the occupation as all stick and no carrot.

"They are just beating people up. Two weeks ago they took four guys. These guys had work papers, but the cops arrested them on drug charges anyway," says a short, tattooed 23-year-old named Max. He wears red shorts and plastic flip-flops and leans on the wall of the old wooden shack where he lives with his wife, Amanda. A small radio blares a tinny stream of baile funk, essentially Brazilian hip-hop, as Amanda does dishes by an outdoor tap just off one of the main stairways. A few other young men, shirtless and wearing baggy shorts in the heat, gather as we talk.

"Most people just want the cops to go away and find someone else to harass," adds Amanda. "They treat us like criminals. They force us inside after 11. If you have what they think is too much money, they take it from you."

"They push us around when we leave or enter the community," says another guy, his arms heavily tattooed, who goes by the nickname The Moor. "They take us in for minor crimes; they kick us, grab our crotches, search us, kick in our doors, beat us up. They do whatever they want. And we can't fight back, or we get killed."

"This whole 'social vision' is not well thought out," says Max. "They promised daycare, clinics and jobs. But all I see are cops."

Everyone I spoke with agreed that the police are too violent and indiscriminate, yet two weeks of visiting various *favelas* reveal interesting class divisions: the working class seems pitted against the young and unemployed, the "dangerous classes" without stable connections to the larger society. For the youth who don't own homes they can sell, occupation may mean a few jobs, but mostly it means constant searches, shakedowns, possible beatings from the police and no late-night dance parties.

Pacification is also a type of "enclosure" in which the "commons" of pirated utilities—like electricity, water and TV—are turned back into commodities that cost money. For the hard-working homeowner, this formal commodification of the pirated commons is a price worth paying. But for the most marginalized elements, pacification is oppression.

Scholars argue that Brazil's crisis of violence is rooted in its history of slavery and frontier conquest. But its more recent origins lie in the country's intense economic inequality and period of military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985. The story of the largest and oldest Rio gang seems to reveal that.

According to its veterans, the Comando Vermelho was founded in prison as a revolutionary organization, when captured Marxist guerrillas from the Falange Vermelha (Red Phalanx) united with elements of the criminal underground. At first the CV functioned as a political organization and a beneficent society for prisoners and ex-convicts. It reached into communities, armed in the name of self-defense and revolution, and started taxing the drug trade.

As the '80s progressed, Brazilian society was wracked by IMF-sponsored structural adjustment programs, which cut state spending, increased unemployment and spurred further migration from the countryside to urban slums. From 1980 to 1990, Rio's overall population growth rate was 8 percent, but the *favela* population surged by 41 percent. As the *favelas* grew, social relations within them frayed.

"By 1991 the CV had become purely criminal. There was no ideology anymore," explains Cmdr. Rodrigo Oliveira of the Civilian Police Special Forces (Rio has several types of police). I met Oliveira in his office to discuss the gangs and the war on them. "Now their goal is power, plain and simple—not even huge private fortunes for the slum 'owners,'" he says, using the colloquial term for the gang leaders. "Mostly it's just about organizational power, weapons and status."

The one bright spot is that there is some investment in the pacified *favelas*. In Dona Marta a new tram runs to the top of the slope; a clinic now operates at the base of the community; and a legal team has visited to help residents with issues related to their social-service and welfare rights. In another *favela*, Pavão-Pavãozinho (Peacock-Little Peacock), I saw hundreds of public housing units being built. Residents are already moving into them. But more common was talk of social workers,

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sports facilities and clinics that "are going to arrive soon" but have not yet come.

According to experts, it all hinges on the social services. Criminologist Enrique Desmond Arias, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, did years of ethnography in some of the *favelas* that are being pacified. "I've seen programs like this in the past—some work; some fail. The essential thing is to systematize and institutionalize the social programs." Arias describes how earlier pacification efforts throughout the city always foundered because of the ad hoc nature of the social services, which were often left to NGOs or the random initiative of individual police commanders. "If the federal government really provides resources and coordination, that will make a huge difference."

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, popularly known as Lula, clearly takes such matters seriously, and his government is in a position to make real social investments. In the past eight years Brazil has paid off its external debt and built up reserves of $240 billion. Though he arrived the son of a São Paulo *favela* dweller, Lula, a former trade unionist who lost a finger on the shop floor and promised something like Roosevelt's New Deal, has instead delivered on the scale of Johnson's "war on poverty"—making meaningful changes but no systemic transformations.

One of Lula's central economic programs is the Bolsa Família. It gives payments of up to $104 a month to poor families. Mothers with children are rewarded for sending kids to school, getting vaccinations and following proper nutrition. The program was started in the 1990s by state governments and expanded under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, then expanded again very widely by Lula. Now one in four Brazilians depends on the Bolsa, and it has helped lift some 21 million out of poverty since 2003. The cost is minimal: Brazil spends less than half of one percent of its $1.6 trillion GDP on antipoverty programs.

Lula's other big initiative is the Growth Acceleration Program (PAC), a macroeconomic and infrastructural policy—classic Keynesianism—that began in 2007 with an initial investment of $4.2 billion. The PAC is building roads, power lines and ports. Lula's finance minister has called for investment of about $250 billion in these infrastructure schemes.

Many PAC public works hire *favela* residents to improve their own communities. But large-scale, capital-intensive projects outside the *favelas* are more common. Regardless, the PAC has helped maintain Brazil's robust economic growth, predicted to be 5 percent this year. Even during the worst of the recent world economic slump, Brazil did well. And inequality is decreasing. Under Lula the top 10 percent of Brazilians have grown 11 percent richer, but the bottom tenth have seen their incomes rise 72 percent.

Sadly, Lula's attempted tropical New Deal will not stamp out the violence. At best, pacification in Rio will create a *cordon sanitaire* of tamed *favelas* in Rio's Zona Sul. This might have a calming effect citywide and could be built on later, but police corruption, drugs and violence will remain entrenched for a long time to come. ■

ROC vs. the NRA

Hit hard by the recession, America's restaurant workers are fighting for a fair deal.

by SPENCER WOODMAN

On April 14, members of ROC United, the nation's largest restaurant workers' organization, gathered for a late-night session at their Washington office. The group was strategizing for the next day's counter-lobbying activities, its first head-to-head battle on the Hill against the National Restaurant Association, one of Washington's largest yet unknown interest groups. Referring to itself infelicitously as the NRA, the association claims more than 380,000 member businesses. Although it supports Democrats on issues like job creation and immigration reform, the NRA is staunchly opposed to government regulation and recently threw its weight behind big-business fights against the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) and healthcare reform.

IGOR KOPELNITSKY

In April its members assembled in Washington for their annual conference and lobbying blitz. In the NRA's cross hairs were two bills that would guarantee sick days for all workers and raise the minimum wage for tipped workers. ROC (Restaurant Opportunities Center) United—founded in New York in 2001 and with a national membership of more than 5,000 servers, busers and other restaurant workers—supports both measures.

As ROC's after-hours meeting began, a woman dressed in sleek corporate attire and wearing a large red-white-and-blue NRA name tag, burst into the room and spilled a mess of documents on the conference table. She had just come from a series of NRA tactical meetings, and the documents she had acquired detailed the NRA's lobbying strategy—both long-term and for the following day, when its immense team of at least 500 NRA members would lobby more than 250 Congressional offices. The badge bearer, Bonnie Kwon, was an employee at ROC. The NRA had been infiltrated.

Spencer Woodman, a freelance writer who lives in Brooklyn, is an editorial assistant and Chinese translator at Harper's *magazine.*

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Labor researchers say the restaurant business—America's largest private employer, with some 13 million workers—has become one of the economy's most rogue sectors of employment. With laws that are inadequate and unenforced, the industry sees widespread wage theft and overtime violations. Restaurant workers across the country report being paid less than the national minimum wage, sometimes even after working overtime. At the core of the problem is the tipping system, which gives the sector nonstandard pay arrangements, making it easier for employers to break rules. Take, for example, the hundreds of employees of the Cheesecake Factory, who have reported wage theft as well as overtime and meal-break violations to ROC and other restaurant associations, and the 100-plus workers who have suffered the same treatment in addition to frequent sexual harassment at the Florida restaurant chain Daisy Dukes.

"In other industries, violations are mainly underground and hidden, but in the restaurant industry they've become so prevalent that they're now common practice," says Annette Bernhardt, policy co-director at the National Employment Law Project (NELP). "The industry has come to the stage where obeying things like overtime pay is purely voluntary."

While the national minimum wage has risen incrementally, the minimum wage of tipped restaurant workers remains at its 1991 level of $2.13 an hour. The industry ranks among the lowest in offering employees paid sick days and benefits, and the use of undocumented immigrant workers is endemic. And while SEIU and UNITE-HERE represent food service workers in large institutions with cafeterias—like airports, hotels and colleges—workers in private restaurants have virtually no union representation.

What's more, the great recession may be worsening the problem. "Since the recession, tips as a composition of restaurant workers' income have fallen," says Nik Theodore, director of the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Illinois, Chicago. "There is evidence that restaurant workers are feeling in their own pocketbooks the financial anxiety of customers." Whereas most financially pinched businesses lay off workers rather than reduce wages, restaurants appear to do the opposite: retain workers but reduce salaries. The tipping system facilitates this by automatically cutting wages as cash-strapped customers tip less.

There have been no formal studies on tipping and the recession, but anecdotal evidence from workers shows a loss of more than $15 a day in tips since the crisis began, no small sum in an occupation with a median wage of $8.75 an hour. Although federal law requires employers to make up the difference between the national minimum wage ($7.25) and the tipped wage if tips lag, workers across the country report this law going unheeded. Such abuses are not limited to low-end establishments.

For example, Andiamo, a high-end restaurant in the Detroit area, made eight of its employees work below minimum wage for months after the 2008 crash. One of those was ROC member Mike Morganroth, who after treating his girlfriend to an anniversary dinner at Andiamo applied for and secured what he thought was a plum job there. "This was a place that everyone in the service industry in Detroit wanted to work," Morganroth says. "And when I started, it wasn't a bad place to work, and I was earning enough to live."

But as the economy ailed, business fell off. In October 2008, Morganroth noticed his tips had diminished to the point where he was making less than the national minimum wage, an arrangement he knew was illegal. He complained to management. "They told us every day that we were lucky to have our jobs during such difficult economic times, and that everyone would have to make cutbacks to keep the place in business," Morganroth recalls. (Andiamo's president and CEO, Joe Vaicari, denies the entirety of Morganroth's account.)

By February 2009, Morganroth's wages had fallen to $2.65 an hour, Michigan's tipped minimum. He began selling his belongings to pay for food, and because he couldn't afford gas for his car, he started walking three and a half miles to work. Morganroth's girlfriend, incredulous that he was earning so little working at such an expensive restaurant, suspected there was a paramour in the mix and eventually left him.

To be sure, the restaurant industry provides millions of well-paying, violation-free jobs, most often held by educated, white waiters who make an average of $3 an hour more than their minority counterparts, according to a ROC national study. Yet the vast majority—about 90 percent—of the industry's workers are denied paid sick days. Maintaining this status quo is now at the top of the NRA's priority list.

Sponsored in the House by Democrat Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the Healthy Families Act (HFA) would mandate seven paid sick days a year to employees of businesses with fifteen or more workers. The act covers workers across all industries but is particularly germane to food service workers, who touch things bound directly for customers' mouths. Supporters of the bill argue that when these workers are compelled to report to work sick, they can spread illnesses to customers, creating a public health risk. Studies have concluded that the United States ranks last of all industrialized nations in providing paid sick leave. It is one of three developed nations that do not guarantee paid sick leave to those with flu symptoms.

The NRA's main talking point on HFA is that it would kill small businesses, which the NRA argues could not bear the cost of paying for two employees to cover one shift. The NRA also opposes any increase to the $2.13 minimum wage for tipped restaurant workers, and by extension, the Wages Act, which seeks to bring that wage to 70 percent of the national minimum, or about $5.50 an hour. The NRA argues that the restaurant industry operates on profit margins too slim to take on additional costs and that the bill would kill jobs.

But Donna Edwards of Maryland, another sponsor of the bill, points out that the freeze on tipped workers' minimum wage has led to "current poverty rates for tipped employees being three times higher than the national average."

In challenging the Wages Act, the NRA accurately points out that no restaurant worker can legally be paid below national minimum wage, even if tips lag. But this rule is often broken. A 2009 NELP survey of workers nationwide found that 12 percent of tipped restaurant workers had their tips stolen by management and 30 percent reported not being paid the tipped minimum wage.

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Enforcement of such laws is the responsibility of the Labor Department, whose ability to enforce workplace regulations markedly declined under George W. Bush's labor secretary, Elaine Chao. The department has just 1,000 enforcement officers to cover the nation's 120 million workers. Thus the job has been largely left to the states. This can go either way. Florida, for instance, has done away with its labor department; New York and California have relatively strong labor oversight.

The vast majority of labor disputes, including those in the restaurant industry, are not dealt with by the public sector at all; they are settled by private trial attorneys, who often take up workers' lawsuits based on their profitability, leaving out workers with smaller claims or more difficult cases. "There needs to be a balance between what can be done by private bar and what needs to be done by public enforcement agencies," says Kim Bobo, executive director of Interfaith Worker Justice and author of *Wage Theft in America*. "And there simply isn't enough being done by federal and many state agencies."

Moreover, the restaurant industry's special treatment by labor laws may contribute to its particularly low labor standards. "The important thing is that tipped pay arrangements can disguise what the actual pay rate is for workers," says NELP's Bernhardt. "So it's difficult for the worker to know if he is the subject of wage theft." Managers will often pool tip money, illegally remove a portion and redistribute the leftover sum to workers. Paying staff a flat weekly rate, despite differences in hours worked and tips earned, is another common scam.

The NRA describes the restaurant industry as a highly competitive business in which owners must make hard decisions to stay afloat. "There are nearly one million restaurants in the US and consumers know they have a choice of where to dine," the NRA's Mike Donohue wrote in an e-mail. "Restaurants earn roughly four cents in profit on every $1 in sales. These are tight margins."

This kind of competition, coupled with lax enforcement, can weigh on labor standards, according to Ken Jacobs, chair of UC Berkeley's Center for Labor Research and Education. "If your competitor realizes he can compete better by breaking the law and paying low wages, there is economic pressure across the industry to do the same," Jacobs says. Conversely, when an industry has uniform and well-enforced labor law, small and large businesses take on the new costs of business proportionally and operate on a new basis of competition. Jacobs points to San Francisco, which, after increasing the tipped minimum wage to $8.50 an hour in 2004, continued to see broad growth in the industry as well as better standards of enforcement. The city's minimum wage has since risen to $9.79 an hour.

According to Bernhardt, however, the industry's culture of noncompliance rules in most areas of the country. For ROC member Derek Robinson, that includes New Orleans. Robinson, who has worked in the city's restaurant industry for eighteen years, says wage and overtime violations pervade its service sector. Bobo estimates that 78 percent of New Orleans's restaurant workers are subject to wage theft.

In winter 2008, Tony Moran's, a French Quarter fine-dining restaurant, began to pay Robinson, on bad weeks, the tipped minimum of $2.13 an hour. The restaurant would also throw private parties and not pay Robinson for working them, and it would knock whole days off his payroll. Management was stealing his tips and sometimes even his meager salary. "I knew it was illegal, but I didn't really know what to do," he says. "It's like fighting a losing war against them down here." (Tony Moran's did not return requests for comment.)

Unable to pay his rent, Robinson went homeless while still working full time. He slept on his friend's couch for three months, incurring credit card debt buying groceries. Robinson, 47, eventually left Tony Moran's and now works at two other French Quarter restaurants, one of which, he reports, is manipulating his wages.

The day after ROC's late-night meeting, the group—made up of restaurant workers and organizers, along with some restaurant owners—hit Capitol Hill. ROC guessed that most, if not all, representatives they visited would also meet with lobbyists from the NRA's massive lobbying contingent. ROC could not match the business group's numbers, so it decided to focus on the Healthy Families Act. ROC's team lobbied eleven Congressional offices, including House majority leader Steny Hoyer, Anh "Joseph" Cao, Nydia Velázquez and Chris Van Hollen.

Although the NRA's issues are available on its website, members of ROC's Washington operation wanted a more intimate understanding of not only the business association's lobbying strategy but also its culture. Lobbying, according to Kwon, has as much to do with social nuance as facts and figures—a good counterlobbyist knows how his or her rival will appeal personally to lawmakers on Capitol Hill. For instance, ROC discovered at the NRA conference that the group sorely lacks racial diversity. Of nearly 500 attendees at the opening ceremony, Kwon counted only ten nonwhites, including herself. With this information, ROC knew that its own diversity could be an asset in connecting with politicians with a large share of minority constituents, who are most likely to be exploited by the restaurant industry.

Many restaurant workers report losing $15 a day in tips since the recession—no small sum when their median wage is just $8.75 an hour.

ROC also discovered how the NRA would court politicians to oppose the HFA: it would invoke the dangers of interventionist policies in the European service sector; emphasize the fragility of small businesses; and invite politicians and aides out to member-owned restaurants. The NRA had also prepared a special "Local Advocacy Alert" about ROC in which ROC was accused of "increasing social justice activity against restaurants" and questioned the validity of ROC's research.

At the NRA workshop, Kwon also discovered that the NRA's plans include the common big-business strategy of Astroturfing—emulating grassroots organizations to create the perception of support for NRA policies among the industry's

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workers. Kwon learned that the NRA is working with the Business Industry Political Action Committee (BIPAC)—whose motto until recently was "electing business to Congress"—to develop websites targeted at restaurant employees. (The director of NRA's PAC, Caitlin Donahue, joined the group last year from her job as executive director of candidate advocacy for BIPAC.)

Available to any member restaurant, BIPAC's websites are made to appear impartial and are not traceable to restaurants or the NRA. Of course, the information presented by BIPAC supports the NRA's main arguments, and BIPAC will tailor the website, free of charge, to match the interface of a member restaurant's website, as it did for the Wendy's fast food chain. After indoctrinating employees on the issues and on the candidates to vote for, BIPAC's websites direct users to voter registration and Congressional letter-writing pages. The vast majority of the NRA's political donations (82 percent over the past ten years) have gone to the GOP; this year's top recipients include Eric Cantor of Virginia and Richard Burr of North Carolina, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. NRA personnel boasted that it had, through BIPAC, recently mustered thousands of employee letters to Congress opposing healthcare reform.

"A lot of workers in America used to go to their unions for information on civic participation and political education," says Kwon. "The NRA with BIPAC want to re-create that model, except for business interests. It seems to have been very effective so far."

For ROC and its allies, the Obama presidency and the Democratic majority in Congress are sources of hope—and stress: there seems to be a real shot at getting progressive legislation passed, but it must happen in a narrow and chaotic time frame. ROC and other groups pushing the HFA think it has a chance of going to the floor this fall, before the midterms. Obama has repeatedly pledged his support for HFA, and the bill has 124 co-sponsors in the House and twenty-four in the Senate. The Wages Act will likely not move before November, but the bill's advocates hope to get it to the floor this winter or next spring. The business lobby has presented tough opposition to it, and some moderate, often labor-friendly Democrats, like Danny Davis and Debbie Wasserman Schultz, have resisted signing on to the bill.

ROC sees its mission to mobilize America's largest workforce as just beginning. "Despite the unbelievably large amount of money that gets poured into lobbying efforts by the NRA, we've made a pretty conscious decision that we're going to take this fight the way we know how to do it—that is, in the streets, bringing people rather than money to struggle for influence," says Jose Oliva, ROC's national policy coordinator. "We hope that by improving wages and conditions in restaurants, we can raise the bar for the entire service sector, and, with that, improve labor standards in the entire private sector to create a new middle class for the twenty-first century. It needs to start somewhere." ■

Letters

(continued from page 2)

"A Caller of the Dove" [April 26], and for quoting portions of Darwish's masterpiece of Arabic and world literature, *Memory for Forgetfulness* (translated by Ibrahim Muhawi). I recently learned of a forthcoming new translation by Dr. Muhawi that should interest readers wishing to discover more of Darwish's prose writing. According to the book announcement for *Journal of an Ordinary Grief* (Archipelago):

"These essays take a close look at the existentially complex situation the Palestinians in Israel face and the ambiguity of Darwish's own identity as an Israeli Palestinian…. The book first appeared [in Arabic] in 1973, two years after the poet went into exile."

A small portion from one of these essays is included in the introduction to *Memory for Forgetfulness*, and shows Darwish's affinity for Franz Kafka.

Mitchell Zucker

Paris

Like many readers of poetry, I imagine, I was delighted to see Jordan Davis's long essay considering the numerous new (and less new) translations of the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish. But as I read, I became more and more perplexed, and disturbed on several counts.

I think it is important for a reviewer of poetry in translation to state whether s/he can read the work in its original language; otherwise, the reader does not know if preferences for one translated passage over another, or dissatisfactions with a line or a stanza, are questions of accuracy or of the reviewer's taste in the receptor language.

It is as natural that Darwish should refer to the Mu'allaqat in his poetry as that Derek Walcott should refer to The Odyssey in his: they are among the foundational texts of literature in Arabic. Nor is it surprising that the Mu'allaqat should be as bloody as Beowulf or The Iliad (though the tales of the amorous exploits of Imru al-Qays are, among other things, a sendup of the kind of "courtly love" that was traditionally the subject of the opening *qasida* of an ode—meant to be outrageous as well as seductive: Rabelais, not *Roman de la Rose*).

But to begin an essay on Darwish with a lengthy disquisition on the Mu'allaqat is as peculiar as writing about Seamus Heaney in the context of Sean-Ghaeilge epics. The interlocutors in Darwish's poetry include Lorca, Paul Celan, Yannis Ritsos, Edward Said, Badr Shakir as-Sayyab (himself a founder of Modernism in Arabic poetry—a Modernism that integrated the same European sources as Eliot and Pound), even Walcott and Mark Strand. Darwish was a world poet (and a polyglot), as well as the poet, the psychic historian, of the Palestinian people; he was also profoundly involved with contemporary Arabic poetry as a mentor and editor.

"Even readers disinclined to set aside the fact that Darwish served on the Executive Committee of the PLO…"? Or that Yehuda Amichai was part of an invasion force in 1948? Or that Paul Claudel, for that matter, was in the French diplomatic corps? I am sure *Nation* readers recall the epithet "premature anti-Fascist" as it was used in the 1950s. Arafat received the Nobel Peace Prize, along with Rabin, no more a saint than he was. So Darwish was for a while a "premature" Fatah official, with a complex secular and democratic political engagement that the reviewer seems not to have investigated, if he was going to refer to Darwish's political action outside his writing at all.

Marilyn Hacker

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Books & the Arts.

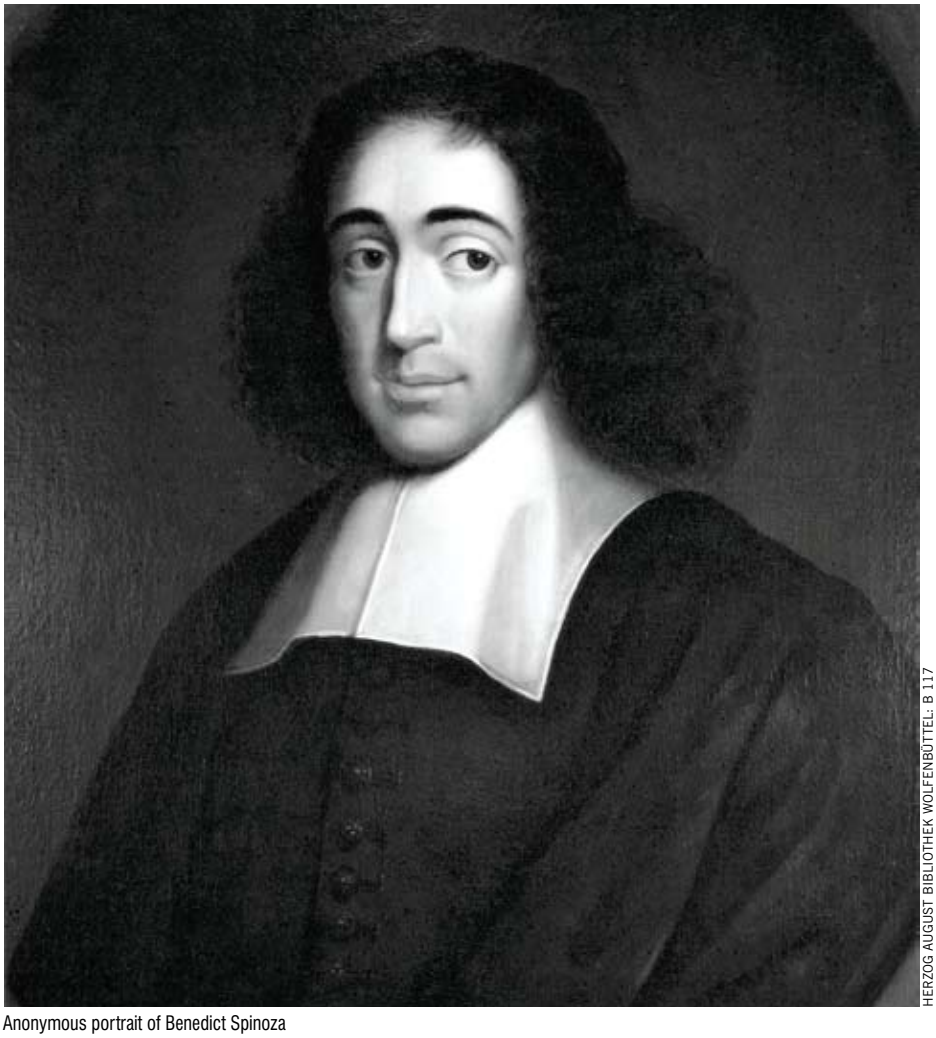
Mind the Enlightenment

by SAMUEL MOYN

Humanity lived in darkness—until He came. In the beginning only a few rallied to his cause. It was too enigmatic to arouse much popular support, and political opposition forced its champions underground. But a coterie of apostles resolved to spread a simplified version of his good news against stiff-necked enemies who often made martyrs of them. Then something remarkable happened. Thanks to a collection of gospels about his morality, the zealous devotion of followers and, of course, the obvious truth of his good news, his call for emancipation spread far beyond his native land and eventually set the world on fire.

This is how Jonathan Israel describes the message, and preaches the story, of a renegade Jew—the philosopher Benedict Spinoza. The creed Spinoza defended was the Enlightenment, with its devotion to reason, not faith, and its vision of secular liberation leading to the establishment of a society based on the collective good rather than the authority of kings and the tradition of priests. Yes, it's true that several centuries on, the Enlightenment has not yet succeeded in either breaking the shackles of outworn creeds or lifting the yoke of scandalous oppression across the globe. But this is no reason to surrender. More preaching of the gospel of Enlightenment is all that's required.

A historian of Spanish imperialism, Dutch republicanism and Jewish commercialism, Jonathan Israel has entered the study of the Enlightenment in an uncommonly bold way. *Radical Enlightenment* (2001), the first installment of a projected three-volume history, ran to more than 800 pages; the second volume, *Enlightenment Contested* (2006), was even longer; the third, which aims to take the story through the French Revolution, is in preparation. Israel's new book, *A Revolution of the Mind*, is an interlude. It offers an essayistic overview of the trilogy's principal theses for the faint of heart, focused on the all-important last act, during which the key themes of what Israel calls "Radical Enlightenment" became politically explosive and the French Revolution loomed.



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Anonymous portrait of Benedict Spinoza

After a number of years of stunned silence, critics have begun to circle Israel's colossus, even as he finishes the extraordinary task of raising it to completion. (Did you know that Spinoza caused the French Revolution?) It is easy to see these critics as so many gnats, not least because there is no gainsaying the scope of Israel's achievement, with his massive compendiums of information now augmented by an accessible preview of the story's end. In the face of Israel's breathtaking account of the far-flung itinerary of Spinoza's thought, which spread across the European continent through thickets of underground intellectual circles, it is hard to offer anything besides applause.

On second glance, however, the gnats seem more like vultures. Their gnawing at the flesh of Israel's creation, even before it has a chance to stride the earth, suggests that it offers the wrong way to think about the Enlightenment both in the past and as a bequest to the present and future.

What was the Enlightenment, and what is its relevance today? For Israel, the answers are simple. Conceived by Spinoza and spread by a range of mostly derivative followers—the Huguenot skeptic Pierre Bayle, the

Samuel Moyn's new book, The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History, *will be published in the fall by Harvard University Press.*

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Encyclopédist Denis Diderot and the materialist libertine Paul-Henri Thiry, known as the Baron d'Holbach—the "Radical Enlightenment" is reducible to a set of core values. They are, Israel writes, "democracy, racial and sexual equality; individual liberty of lifestyle; full freedom of thought, expression, and the press; eradication of religious authority from the legislative process and education; and full separation of church and state." As such, the Enlightenment, or at least this radical version, is simply those principles deemed worthy of rescuing from the past and protecting today.

Spinoza was born into a community founded mainly by former Marranos, the Iberian Jews who had pretended to convert to Catholicism to escape persecution and, after 1492, expulsion. Some of them moved to Amsterdam, where they could practice Judaism openly. Born in 1632, Spinoza was excommunicated in 1656, almost certainly for his libertine beliefs and failure to follow Jewish law. While vilified from the beginning of his career as a philosopher, Spinoza has attracted followers in every century. Liberal secularists (notably Jews among them) have a long tradition of lionizing him; Lewis Feuer's *Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism* appeared more than a half-century ago. Israel inherits the view of Spinoza as the founder of liberal secularism; by casting God aside in favor of a philosophy of naturalism, Spinoza paved the way for responsible politics today.

With its sly interpretations of Scripture against the traditional God, Spinoza's classic *Theologico-Political Treatise* of 1670 marks the breakthrough to his central principle: there can be no divinity in the world incompatible with nature. The universe, he insisted, is composed of one material "substance"; there is no God, no human soul. If miracles appear to have occurred, it is simply because their observers do not understand how to interpret the laws of nature. Spinoza's complicated *Ethics* openly advances his monistic principle that if God exists, it is simply another word for nature: *deus sive natura*. In turn, his politics are based on natural rights that, in a departure from the social contract tradition, are preserved by individuals rather than surrendered to a sovereign. Spinoza hoped for a democratic republic in which untrammeled freedom of thought—what he called *libertas philosophandi*—would be preserved for those gifted and learned enough to make use of it.

Spinoza's radicalism was certainly frightening in its time, and Israel has valuably if aggressively opened the question of its influence on the Enlightenment and the era of revolution. The traditional practice has been to cast the Enlightenment not only as a movement that crystallized decades after Spinoza's lifetime but also as one both more diverse and more unified than Israel is willing to allow. It was composed, for most observers, of considerable variegation, with national and denominational differences. Some observers, notably Gertrude Himmelfarb, J.G.A. Pocock and the late Roy Porter, emphasized that each country had its own Enlightenment; while the pioneering historian David Sorkin has recently suggested that alongside the better-known atheistic or deist Enlightenments there were powerful, and even dominant, attempts by the religious to make faith and reason compatible. Despite this emphasis on variation, however, most persist in casting the Enlightenment as a single movement. For Peter Gay, Israel's most obvious predecessor in the attempt to offer an overall picture, the movement was championed by a "flock" of philosophers.

Wrong, Israel says. In truth, he writes, there were only two kinds of Enlightenment that really mattered, the true and the treasonous, and one must still choose between them. With delight in unmasking rival claimants to Enlightenment as frauds or fence-straddlers, Israel insists that only a small coterie of "radical" figures really cared about the core values. Meanwhile, those typically considered the luminaries of the age—from John Locke through Voltaire, and from Jean-Jacques Rousseau through Immanuel Kant—sought only "marginal reform" and cravenly sacrificed the core values to their misbegotten flattery of existing clerical and political authorities.

For Israel, Spinoza's true heirs have enemies everywhere, including those whose lesser version of Enlightenment betrays the principles it purports to advance. Don't pretend that there wasn't a fundamental choice to be made about the very meaning of Enlightenment and modernity, Israel insists repeatedly. You could choose some halfway house that left the old order standing—notably the romance of American liberty (twinned with black slavery) or English liberties (which fell in with social and religious conservatism). Or you could embrace Enlightenment freedom in its unadulterated form, even if that entailed demolishing the corrupt old order and starting anew. Allegiance to the true gospel of Spinoza left no other viable choice, either intellectually or politically.

Israel's monomaniacal Spinoza worship is amusing and exasperating by turns. For a start, his insistence that Spinoza was the singular font of the Enlightenment leaves him without a story of the Enlightenment's intellectual or cultural origins. Every historian has to begin somewhere, but the fact that Israel begins with Spinoza, and then reduces most of what follows the philosopher to a footnote, leaves his account of the Enlightenment founded on something like immaculate conception.

Israel is surely right that Spinoza's influence in the eighteenth century has been neglected, even if the proper response is not to overstate it, and even if this influence could itself take many different forms. One of Israel's most astute critics, the French historian Antoine Lilti, argues that the clandestine movements that sometimes claimed Spinoza's legacy were themselves various, and "Spinozism" became more of a battle cry for its opponents than a detailed and coherent intellectual position. In any case, it strains credulity to organize what was a massive and century-long cultural phenomenon around the philosophical breakthrough of a single thinker.

If Israel thinks otherwise, it is because he mixes his own sense of philosophical superiority with the very different problem

In This Essay

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Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy.
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of historical effects. He is on firm ground, for example, when he insists that his hero defended a much more robust version of freedom of thought than that of Locke and others, who were most interested in enabling a compromise of Christian denominations to avoid the specter of religious war. (Locke, for example, drew the line of tolerance at atheism, which he was happy to see suppressed violently by the state.) It is another matter, however, whether Spinoza or his clandestine followers were chiefly responsible for the rise of wider toleration of speech and opinion. The experience of limited toleration, and raucous city life, may well have led to more inclusion of previously stigmatized groups like atheists than Spinoza's arguments about freedom of thought did, even if they were better.

A reliance on Spinoza makes Jonathan Israel a poor guide to the rise of modern democracy.

Yet now, as his history approaches the era of breakthrough revolution, Israel goes further, crediting the invention of political democracy in the current sense to Spinoza's genius. Even if the idiosyncratic thinker's defense of rule by the people was unprecedented in the annals of thought, he was contemptuous of the intellectual abilities of most people, and endorsed democracy primarily because he thought it the form of government most likely to preserve a space for the kind of elite knowledge he offered in his philosophy books. Essential elements of democratic rule like representationalism and constitutionalism, each of which requires detailed theories, are simply absent from Spinoza's thought. The rise of modern democracy is the phenomenon Israel most wants to explain, but his reliance on Spinoza makes him a poor guide.

A faulty premise drives these conclusions. Israel is tempted to think that a philosophy of naturalism and liberal-democratic politics are inextricably linked. For him, Spinoza's proclamation of the former forced the rise of the latter, as a conceptual and historical matter alike. Spinoza indeed argued that the universe was only one substance—if God did exist, it was not as transcendent creator, extraordinary miracle-worker or authoritative lawgiver but rather simply as nature itself. This "liberation" from God, Israel seems to think, could not help but topple false principles of social and political organization. *Deus sive natura* knocked the legs out from under priests and kings alike, and liberalism appears to him as the inevitable outcome of their fall. This is the crucial leitmotif of Israel's works.

This stance, however, leads Israel to avoid or excuse figures whose conclusions about naturalism are not identical to his own. Thomas Hobbes, most obviously, declared a politics likewise based on viewing man and the universe as nothing more than matter in motion. In Hobbes's *Leviathan*, written a generation before Spinoza's works, human passion and reason result from wholly natural processes: the body is an engine of endlessly disruptive wants, and it drives a vain search for superiority that, as Hobbes remarked, "ceaseth only in death." For Hobbes, the point of politics is to displace the anarchic democracy of natural bodies with an artificial body: the state. It is thanks to the state alone that peace is available. Natural rights—an idea Hobbes helped to forge before Spinoza came on the intellectual scene—are surrendered to a powerful sovereign in the name of safety rather than preserved as insurance against abuse (see Corey Robin, "The First Counter-revolutionary," Oct. 19, 2009). Nowhere, however, does Israel acknowledge what Hobbes's case makes plain: that the connection between metaphysics and politics is neither direct nor necessary.

Even worse, the political planks that Israel joins were hardly a unified set on their own. Throughout his books, Israel finds various figures hewing incompletely to his list of radical principles, and he inevitably faces the choice of forcing them into his Procrustean bed or explaining them away. As you read along for page after page, Israel's basic procedure in confronting a new figure—the Neapolitan magus Giambattista Vico, to pick one at random—is first to decide whether he is an heir of Spinoza or a holdout to truth, and then to mount an argument for the classification. What anyone thought, how he argued for it, and why are unfailingly subordinate to assessing his proximity to a philosophical position almost no one in fact held full-fledged. (Israel deems Vico an heir.)

For this reason, one of Israel's most trenchant critics, Anthony LaVopa, has alleged that the central mistake of Israel's Enlightenment project is a "package logic." As Israel himself says in *A Revolution of the Mind*, "the core ideas of modern Western secularism interconnect and function together socially and culturally as a set." Yet the result of evaluating a century's worth of thought according to how closely it conforms to a checklist is strange history, and arguably not history at all. Israel refuses to see legitimate debate in riotous diversity. Thinkers who do not adhere to his particular definition of Radical Enlightenment, he implies, were simply sops to the old order. Instead of allowing for different journeys from metaphysics to politics, or distinctive sets of essential principles, Israel's checklist is in effect a litmus test. To fail it is to have sold out the truth, either out of discreditable cowardice or because you were paid off, as Voltaire was by his patron Frederick the Great.

In *The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition*, Zeev Sternhell also sees the Enlightenment as an all-or-nothing package of living truths. This premise leads, similarly, to repetitive exercises in classification; but revealingly, Israel and Sternhell disagree completely about who goes where. Sternhell thinks Voltaire and Kant—whom Israel condemns for backsliding and compromising—were the central icons; and given Rousseau's prominence in France and the debt of the great sage of Königsberg to him, Sternhell goes so far as to define the true Enlightenment as "Franco-Kantian." Meanwhile, Israel—who also excludes Rousseau from Radical Enlightenment—lionizes Johann Gottfried Herder, the German biblical critic and linguist, because he liked Spinoza and condemned colonialism, even as Sternhell denounces him as the spiritual father of fascism.

What has gone wrong in both cases is the enforcement of categories that were not in circulation at the time of the Enlightenment. It is one thing to treat the notion of radical versus moderate Enlightenment (Israel) or Franco-Kantian versus anti-Enlightenment traditions (Sternhell) as useful heuristic devices. But it is another to allow those devices to acquire the tenor of reality, for then the crucial task becomes to determine in which category the thinkers fit. That task accomplished, the categories themselves are then put in contention. Boldly, Israel insists that "there were and could be only two Enlightenments," the radical and anything else.

Ultimately, the trouble is not simply that Israel treats his checklist as a package but that he claims its principles are not themselves part of the history he is supposed to narrate. Israel treats his necessarily linked values as eternal truths rather than historical inventions with different possible ver-

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sions and alternative implications. At one point, Israel claims that the principles of Radical Enlightenment possess "an absolute quality in terms of reason which places them above any possible alternative." It is a remarkable statement, and has the dogmatic ring of a profession of faith.

And Israel's way of writing history shows he believes. If you know in advance that you are chronicling the adventures of confirmed truths, then the messiness of actual history melts away. Instead, you will produce a story of the annunciation of eternal truth followed by episodes of ragtag advocates repelling malign forces on the road to eventual supremacy. In his books Israel constantly slips into renditions of past thinkers that sound like entreaties to finish the job now: "Only by enlightening all of humanity can men finally topple…senseless usages, vicious fanaticism…and absurd forms of vanity that everywhere blights mankind." Scholarship and sermonizing merge into a church history of secularism. No wonder another critic, J.B. Shank, mischievously says Israel's works breathe the spirit of Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens.

Israel's defense of the 'Radical Enlightenment' has the sound of a profession of faith.

"God is not great," however, is not a historical argument. Leaving aside its emergence and contents, Israel's theory of how the "Radical Enlightenment" made its way into the heart of European politics is perhaps the result of another aspect of his church history. Ever since the French Revolution, the traditional argument has been that reckless philosophers caused it: *la faute à Voltaire*, went the old thesis, or *la faute à Rousseau*. Even as he portrays these old prophets of modernity as quislings, awarding *le crédit à Spinoza* instead, Israel self-consciously revives an old claim—books made a revolution. There was a "revolution of the mind," Israel says, which paved the way for the revolution of politics.

Against the views of Robert Darnton and other historians who have shown that philosophical books were only one of many kinds of texts published and read during the Enlightenment, Israel persuasively worries that scholarship focused on the circulation of books ignores or downplays the actual ideas in them. At the same time, Israel is happy to appeal to such arguments when explaining how Spinoza's ideas were disseminated. But in the end, Israel's creditable attempt to emphasize the role of ideas in history goes off the rails because he does not offer a new approach to studying it.

Israel forthrightly acknowledges that, absent a theory of social change, it is too simple to argue that the triumph of powerful ideas is ineluctable: "it was not ideas on their own that did the work." At a tantalizing moment, Israel cites "the interaction of social forces and ideas" that drove the Enlightenment toward revolution. Ultimately, however, Israel relies on the dim notion that under the old order a populace with festering grievances was mobilized by Spinoza's new ideas, even as the latter's partisans were driven to further radicalism in various controversies. But as an explanation for historical events, appeals to festering grievances are not especially powerful: simmering discontent usually just keeps on simmering, and Israel does nothing else to lend his idealistic account social depth.

As a result, Israel ends up with no explanation for why his package of emancipatory values succeeded, except that they are true. They were what society needed, and always needs, and they caused a revolution. But this is no explanation at all—or at least not a historical one. Perhaps not by coincidence, it is much like saying Christianity succeeded because Jesus was the savior; but Spinoza is not supposed to be a messiah who triumphs because he knows the truth that sets you free. Secular history is very often the story of bad ideas winning and good ideas losing; ideas themselves don't explain why they succeed or fail. Despite his hardheaded empiricism—he never allows himself to get bogged down in the details of his texts—Israel gives even less attention to the wider context, his justification being the romantic but unpersuasive assumption that once discovered, Radical Enlightenment could not help but conquer all.

Israel is tempted to cast those with alternative views as enemies not of his argument but of the Enlightenment itself. That may be true in some cases, but even then it is not at all an enlightened response. Yet Israel is certainly right to find in the later eighteenth century some philosophical and moral breakthrough that progressives need to claim as their own. The question is how. Now that Israel's story has reached the central political breakthrough of the era, the French Revolution, the stakes of his argument are at their highest.

As a general matter, Israel is so set on condemning a series of false or "moderate" liberations of the era that he entirely skirts the difficult problem of how to define "radical" liberation. Who on the left today could fail to sympathize with Tom Paine and his denunciation not only of the British aristocracy but also the American revolutionary solution he inspired and then criticized for establishing tenacious new hierarchies of race and wealth? By the same token, who on the left could deny that the Enlightenment didn't get very far in explaining how to create a free and equal society, and that its radicalism was shot through with promising starts and difficult choices? Is the Enlightenment best understood as a checklist, or a new set of problems? Israel is most disappointing when he celebrates the Enlightenment as if it had all the answers, when in fact its legacy is a rich and burdensome quandary that remains to be solved.

The biggest worry with Israel's story, therefore, is his belief that the moral horizon of today's partisans of Radical Enlightenment is crystal clear. Nothing could be further from the truth. Israel's Radical Enlightenment, explosive in its time, turns out to be not that radical according to the standards of today, and in fact did not get very far on crucial issues. In his new book, for example, Israel has two interesting chapters on radical dissents to the rise of laissez-faire economics and Enlightenment militarism; but these chapters show mainly that the search for both the proper organization of the economy and the achievement of a just world order barely began in the era, even as a matter of theory. Most disconcerting, Israel seems to have no interest in the possibility that radicalism itself, including Spinozism, could take many different current and future forms. Moses Hess, a founder of communism in the nineteenth century, who also anticipated Zionism, fawned over Spinoza but reached rather different political conclusions.

The profound ambiguity of radicalism, and indeed of fervent commitment to the Enlightenment, is the subject Dan Edelstein's remarkable study *The Terror of Natural Right*. It is one of the most memorable and absorbing books on the era I have ever read, precisely because it refuses simple answers, and does so with considerable style.

Edelstein, a professor of French literature, is also interested in naturalism, and especially in what Enlightenment and revo-

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lutionary figures thought it might mean to establish a society in conformity with natural law and natural rights. Somehow Edelstein fails to mention Spinoza, in part because he traces the utopia of nature to many different sources, including literary ones. As Edelstein knows, most French political thinkers spent the Enlightenment proposing ways to repair the monarchy, and indeed the first years of the revolution were devoted to exactly this task. Throughout the eighteenth century, however, literary depictions of an idyllic golden age were preparing a "cult of nature." These images and stories were little more than a collection of distant fantasies until the failure of constitutional monarchy midway through the revolution provided an unexpected and indeed unsought opportunity to bring into being not a reconstructed rule of kings but the absolute reign of nature.

Contrary to Israel, Edelstein argues that Enlightenment naturalism turned out to be a recipe for terrible wrongs. Edelstein wants to know how the Jacobins, whom he rightly credits with some of the most progressive and egalitarian aims any political movement has ever professed (notably the invention of social rights to work and education), ended up orchestrating a reign of terror. Against interpretations that simply blame circumstances, Edelstein too insists that ideas mattered. But the most provocative argument

In Our Orbit

What Was Lost

by FREDERICK DEKNATEL

One day in the fall of 1970, as he was studying Arabic in a mountain village overlooking Beirut, Kai Bird heard on the BBC that a plane hijacked by a group of young Arab men, "secular Marxists and Palestinian nationalists," had landed at Beirut's international airport. From his perch in the mountains the 19-year-old Bird had a view of the plane on the tarmac; he did not know that his girlfriend was one of its passengers. She was a hostage of the Dawson's Field hijackings, which violently thrust the Palestinians' struggle for statehood into international view and ended with three empty airliners exploding at a former RAF airstrip in the Jordanian desert.

Bird's girlfriend survived the ordeal, and her story is a window onto Bird's uncommon, personal and privileged perspective on the Middle East. In *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age Between the Arabs and Israelis, 1956–1978* (Scribner; $30), Bird, a *Nation* contributing editor, sifts through his memories as the son of an American diplomat stationed in Jerusalem, Beirut and Cairo and sets them against the region's history over three busy decades. The book's title refers to the barbed-wired checkpoint that demarcated the 1949 armistice line between Israeli and Jordanian sections of Jerusalem, and through which Bird and his father drove daily en route to the Anglican Mission School in West Jerusalem from their home in Sheikh Jarrah. Minus his father, Bird and his younger sister and mother evacuated Jerusalem for Beirut in 1956 when Israel, France and Britain invaded Egypt in an attempt to topple Gamal Abdel Nasser and seize the Suez Canal—a conflict that did not end until the following year, when David Ben-Gurion, under threat of economic sanctions from President Eisenhower, ordered Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai. A decade later, again without his father, Bird's family fled Cairo for Athens before the outbreak of the Six-Day War. In the early 1960s the Birds lived in a dusty consular compound in Dhahran, in eastern Saudi Arabia, when the kingdom was comparatively open and not nearly as rich. Most expat families in the adjacent oil compound survived the desert with bathtub gin; Bird's father smuggled in Scotch. During a second stint there in the 1970s, his parents counted among their friends Salem bin Laden, an urbane brother of Osama who "frequently dropped by our house in Riyadh and brought along his guitar so that he and Mother could play Joan Baez and Bob Dylan tunes."

Bird's memoir is about understanding but rejecting borders as they were being redrawn and reinforced in the postwar Middle East, which he had the liberty to do as an American expatriate growing up "out of place." Bird uses the phrase deliberately: it's a nod to Edward Said's description of statelessness, though Bird never likens his own wanderings to those of a refugee. The politics of Bird's parents were a product of the bygone era of empathic Arabists in the Foreign Service; their son shared their support of the Palestinians. As a university student in Beirut he saw the Palestinian resistance grow armed and stout in a city that was the region's cultural capital on the eve of civil war. The wholeness of Bird's Middle Eastern story is really a longing for the Jerusalem of his childhood, before Israel's victory over Nasser and the Arabs in 1967, when Mandelbaum Gate was demolished and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza began. "The Israelis proclaimed the city unified," he writes. "It was not—and it is not."

Bird was an earnest antiwar college student in the United States in the early 1970s when he met Susan Goldmark (whom he would later marry), and learned another lesson about dislocation. Goldmark is the daughter of Austrian Jews who fled the Holocaust, and stories of her parents' escape to the Balkans and Italy and eventually to New York City came to serve as a foil for Bird's view of Palestinian dispossession and Israeli aggression. Bird doesn't equate their suffering but rather contemplates the collective failure of Israelis and Palestinians to reconcile their histories of loss and victimhood. Among his parents' friends in Jerusalem was an Armenian family with long ties to the city. They fled in 1948 and returned two years later, but their property had been expropriated. "The Kalbians identified themselves as Christian, Arabic-speaking Armenians whose home was Palestine," Bird writes. The nascent Jewish state "regarded them as non-Jews and therefore Arabs." Eventually they immigrated to America. Bird links their displacement with the plight of Susan's parents. In 1959 she and her mother returned to Graz to knock on the door of their old house, stolen during the war by a neighbor, "to see what she had lost."

Bird admits that he has long avoided writing about the Middle East because "I did not wish to spend my entire life forlornly trying to rectify the injustices of the Nakba and the Shoah." With its conviction and range, *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate* avoids that futility. Bird's honest book recalls a remark of the historian Albert Hourani about the Six-Day War: "Victory is a much less profound experience than defeat." ■

Frederick Deknatel, a spring 2010 Nation *intern, is a former Fulbright Fellow in Syria.*

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in his book is that the ideas that made the revolution spiral out of control were the cult of nature and the belief in natural rights.

When Israel takes up the problem, he relentlessly and remorselessly criticizes Rousseau, and it is clear he is preparing the familiar argument that when the French Revolution went awry on the Jacobins' watch, it was because Rousseau's baleful notions of citizen virtue and "the general will" triumphed. The good parts of the revolution were Spinoza's doing, in Israel's view, but the bad parts were not his fault: "the darker side…was chiefly inspired by the Rousseauist tendency." Edelstein shows that, if anything, the reverse was true. It was early in the French Revolution that Rousseau's hopes to remodel politics along the lines of classical republics like Athens and Sparta reigned; once in power the Jacobins rejected these schemes so as to let nature rule.

To craft his argument, Edelstein combines a long-range depiction of Enlightenment fantasies of a polity based on nature alone with an intrepid study of what happened beginning in 1792–93, when Louis XVI was tried and executed—an event that set the stage for the Jacobins to come to power later. Edelstein grippingly shows that because the earlier tradition of "natural law" allowed for the identification and destruction of nature's enemies, it was tempting for Jacobins building a natural society to deem threats real and imagined inimical not to themselves alone but to humanity in general—outlaws of nature to be put to death.

The category of the *hostis humani generis*, or foe of the human race, has been much discussed lately, not least because of the "war on terror." It is most frequently associated with the way the law of nations treated pirates, who were so deplored by civilization as to be the first subjects of universal criminal jurisdiction. Edelstein shows that the idea of an "enemy of humanity" drew on classical ideas as well as theological ones: the phrase was once attached to the Devil, and remained associated with diabolical malignancy. Over centuries the idea expanded, especially in early international law, so that along with pirates, savages abroad were sometimes viewed as so far beyond redemption as to fall outside the pale of humanity, a status that earned them the just enmity and violent punishment of anyone and everyone. Tyrants were also occasionally placed outside the law. Israel himself cites Diderot, one of his heroes, promising to "exterminate" tyrants. He excuses what he calls the Enlightenment's "almost frightening militancy," but for Edelstein it takes center stage.

The Terror of 1793–94 commenced when the Jacobins began treating their foes as enemies of humanity and legitimate victims. Brilliantly, Edelstein demonstrates that a politics of nature, though democratic and compatible with the will of the people for some, was imagined by key Jacobins as a warrant for scuttling or at least postponing democracy. (If only they had known that naturalism and liberalism were inseparable!) After proposing a notably egalitarian constitution in 1793, the Jacobins allowed it to go missing as they gravitated toward a new religion of nature. God may not have been great, but nature was.

For Edelstein's favorite political thinker and actor, Louis-Antoine Saint-Just, there was no need for further laws than the principles of natural right, and social harmony simply depended on their inculcation—and, when necessary, their bloody enforcement. "No one can govern innocently," Saint-Just wrote blithely and chillingly. "Natural right," Edelstein concludes, "could lead the revolutionaries to become Terrorists in good Enlightenment faith (which, of course, is not to say the Enlightenment inevitably led to the Terror)." If Edelstein is right, calling for Enlightenment redemption, and the saving truth of nature, is never going to be enough on its own.

Edelstein thinks his central lesson, in the wake of George W. Bush's war against all enemies foreign and domestic, is that ordinary law should be made to anticipate extraordinary times so as to prevent the frightening category of "outlawry" from being invoked to sanction the worst abuses. Perhaps. Read alongside Israel, Edelstein is also saying that the Enlightenment is not simply an "absolute," nonnegotiable bequest to reactivate again and again. Even were its "radical" path possible to isolate, it branched out immediately, for good and for ill, and to this day some of its branches have not yet been traveled to the end.

God knows, progressive secularism needs a lift today; but reassurance won at the price of intellectual complacency is not the right kind. Israel criticizes those who see diverse Enlightenments in the eighteenth century, but the real need is to acknowledge that the Enlightenment had many rival futures from the outset, and could still have many possible versions to come. The Enlightenment's legacy for contemporary politics is there to revive, but not by mindlessly putting aside the complexity of historical origins and the problem of alternative outcomes. It is neither cowardice nor betrayal to insist that the Enlightenment's main lesson is to be mindful of how much it has left its inheritors to figure out. ■

Aug. 5

When a man is asked to sing of his anger
the risk is that without remorse virtue dies
War then is in the face, in this homelessness,
the despair which couldn't wait couldn't ask for

We don't talk to each other anymore we
email global reach managed minutes morning
to noon in the hospitals we are all old
forbidden to talk of lost sons, asked to smile

Enough, they'll hear the news, men in photographs
die and nothing will seem simple, their faces
especially where sorrow stretched everything

Maps point to? and defeat looms where? out there where?
Here the naked body is where terror lies
Guilt builds monuments, the way we spend our time

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The First Balloon Crossing, 7th January 1785 (1840), by E.W. Cocks

The Enhancement of the Senses

by PAULA FINDLEN

In December 1831 a youthful Charles Darwin, recently graduated from Cambridge University, set sail as the ship's naturalist on the HMS *Beagle*, his heart filled with the promise of the adventure that lay before him. What did Darwin know? He could not have anticipated that the conclusions he would draw from his field notes about life on the Galapagos Islands would transform our understanding of the nature of animals and their relationship to that special animal of a human kind. He was the grandson of the controversial physician Erasmus Darwin, living in the heyday of the British Empire at the very moment in which the dual passions for science and exploration converged. He was a Victorian gentleman in pursuit of knowledge and adventure, a disinterested spirit in the midst of the global struggle among nations for profit and power. He was also a great reader of the many important works of science and travelers' tales of the preceding generations. He was not yet a "scientist"—a term that would not enter the lexicon until the early 1830s with the formation of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Much as we would like to proclaim Darwin the intellectual beacon of the nineteenth century, he was equally shaped by late eighteenth-century Romantic habits of mind, scientific practices and experiments in writing about the natural world. The mature Darwin was by no means a Romantic in any aesthetic sense. The Malthusian-inspired concept of evolution that he would eventually articulate in *On the Origin of Species* did not attempt to establish nature's poetic unity, which characterized the Romantic movement at its height. Yet the eagerness of 22-year-old Darwin to follow in the footsteps of recent scientific explorers made him the final and most brilliant product of Romantic science.

The Age of Wonder
How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science.
By Richard Holmes.
Vintage. 552 pp. Paper $17.95.

To Richard Holmes, Darwin's 1831 expedition was the apogee of an "age of wonder" inaugurated by the wealthy gentleman-naturalist Joseph Banks in 1768 when he set sail with Captain James Cook on the *Endeavour* for the island of Tahiti to observe the transit of Venus. With a lively wit and a meticulous attention to detail, Holmes charts in *The Age of Wonder* the era in which Romanticism's long rebellion against the image of a clockwork universe inspired great works of knowledge and creativity—what he terms "the second scientific revolution." The objective developments in science of the preceding century gave way to subjective reflection about the meaning of understanding nature. Poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats marveled at the new vision of the world wrought by science. At the same time, the British astronomers, naturalists, chemists and experimenters of their generation developed a conception of the world that was, in its own way, profoundly poetic. In private contemplation, public lectures and books written for a general audience craving the latest and most exciting discoveries, they opened up vistas of the imagination, exciting all who knew them about the potential for science to be a spiritual compass as well as a productive engine for the advancement of their society. Put another way, we might think of *The Age of Wonder* as a story of how the spirit of Newton gradually gave birth to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818) and subsequently reinvented itself in the generation that Darwin embodied.

But let us return to Tahiti and lose our clothes for a while, as Joseph Banks did for about three months after he disembarked from the *Endeavour* in the spring of 1769. When Banks returned to England two years later, his mouth was full of Tahitian words; his bags were laden with trinkets, his specimen boxes rich with seeds and plants and his notebooks all but bursting at the spine with the observations of an anthropologist in the making who had fully immersed himself in a truly different culture. Banks would be celebrated by the British people for surviving this arduous and exotic Pacific voyage. With his ascent to the presidency of the Royal Society of London in 1778 and the knighthood bestowed upon him as director of Kew Gardens in 1781, he became the leading figure of the British scientific establishment and its principal patron until his death in 1820. Under his watchful guidance, British science grew and matured.

Yet the most salient aspect of Banks's voyage was his personal response to the unsettling isolation and biodiversity of Tahiti. In a way that others found alternately fascinating and disturbing, Banks had temporarily become a different man. Freed from the trappings of his own society, he had allowed himself to

Paula Findlen, a professor of history at Stanford University, is the author of Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy *and the editor of* Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything.

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be seduced by Tahitian customs, the seeming ease of social relations and the rhythm of rituals. Banks observed and participated, and did not conceal its effect on his psyche even if he could never bring himself to publish a full account of all that he had seen and experienced on the voyage of the *Endeavour*. Had he remained permanently at a remove from civilization, his life would have become a tale of a real-life Robinson Crusoe, yet another Englishman lost on a remote island. Instead Banks transformed his encounter with Tahiti into the basis for an incredible career as Britain's unofficial statesman of science, creating a web of scientific correspondents all over the world. A breakfast invitation to his home at 32 Soho Square was the first steppingstone for any ambitious scientist aspiring to a good career in the next fifty years. But the memory of his song of Tahitian innocence would continue to inspire epic poetry well into the nineteenth century.

The balloon craze inaugurated by the Montgolfier brothers was a crucial episode of deflation.

If Banks embodied the spirit of those wealthy British gentlemen who saw science as a global adventure of self-discovery—an attitude that eventually gave birth to the Royal Geographical Society in 1830 and the great age of polar expeditions and mountaineering, which made men such as Robert Scott into the heroes of a later era—the modest and self-effacing William Herschel represented the other face of science in the late eighteenth century. The son of a Hanoverian regimental musician, young William first set eyes on the cliffs of Dover when he accompanied his father—and the band—to England in 1756. His musical abilities eventually earned him the position of organist at the Bath Octagon Chapel. While playing for the well-heeled inhabitants of a fashionable resort town, Herschel nurtured his passion for astronomy. In 1766, several years before Banks sailed for Tahiti, Herschel purchased a secondhand refracting telescope and began his journal of celestial observations. A tinkerer and a thinker, he soon realized the limits of this kind of instrument. He began to develop his own version of the reflecting telescope first presented to the Royal Society of London by Isaac Newton in 1672 but rarely used by astronomers before the late eighteenth century. He made his own metal mirrors, experimenting with different diameters as well as the length of the telescope to achieve the best effect—an upright image of the heavens on a polished surface with a wide angle of vision.

Herschel's succession of increasingly powerful telescopes yielded some of the most breathtaking observations of the age. With the devoted assistance of his sister Caroline, who emigrated from Hanover in 1772 and became an accomplished astronomer in her own right, Herschel identified the Pole Star as a double star. Within a decade he increased the number of known nebulae tenfold, and then doubled that number. His uncanny powers of observation and dedication to his science produced legions of admirers. If Herschel had simply been a collector of data, he might not have earned a principal place of honor in Holmes's account of Romantic science. It was his vision of the universe that made him a source of poetic inspiration. Thanks to Herschel's keen eye, the universe was no longer a series of points of light etched into the inverted bowl of the heavens; it was a product of deep space and ultimately deep time. The late-eighteenth-century heavens appeared immense but measurable, filled with all sorts of new and surprising phenomena (though lacking the forms of extraterrestrial life that Herschel ultimately had hoped to discover).

Herschel recognized that the varying brightness of stars was a product of distance rather than size. Sweeping the heavens every night, he meticulously rearranged the universe, locating each celestial object with a new degree of precision on a new map of the skies. Examining the constellation of Gemini on March 13, 1781, he observed an unusual object. He initially identified it as a comet. Three weeks later, he changed his mind. During the spring and summer of 1781 virtually every major astronomer confirmed the exhilarating discovery of Uranus, the first new planet to be identified since antiquity. The German organist made the pilgrimage to London to meet Banks, who instructed the Royal Society to admit Herschel to its ranks and to crown his accomplishment by awarding him the Copley Gold Medal. By producing a telescope that was more accurate than the Royal Greenwich Observatory's celebrated and costly instruments, Herschel rightfully earned his place as one of the true wonders of his age.

Herschel's ambitions for the understanding of the cosmos continued to grow with the size of his telescope. In Holmes's account, we see how a German reader of Kant disclosed the existence of an unbounded and infinite universe that nurtured the dreams of the British Romantics. Coleridge would recall marveling with his father, as a boy of 8, at the wonder of the winter sky in 1781. Keats fondly remembered schoolboy games inspired by the new constitution of the heavens. They belonged to a generation whose parents and tutors conveyed the excitement of Herschel's telescope, which quickly became a commercial product. They learned to read the skies like a vast musical composition of the kind that Herschel may have inspired in the mind of Joseph Haydn, who visited the astronomer in his observatory in 1792. Was the doughty Herschel the inspiration for Coleridge's Ancient Mariner? Holmes would have us believe that his was one of several steady hands directing the rudder of the British imagination until his death in 1822.

But the Romantics were not only inspired by bright and tangible accomplishments enlarging the stock of scientific knowledge. They were just as transfixed by the failures of science and the sense of disequilibrium or estrangement that shadowed scientific undertakings. Holmes treats the balloon craze inaugurated by the Montgolfier brothers in 1783 as a crucial episode of Romantic deflation. A fascinating marriage of the new chemistry of air and the ancient dream of aviation, balloon trials initially promised myriad new and transformative experiences. The ascent of the first aeronauts tested the limits of human endurance—and by the time a balloon reached the altitude of 23,000 feet it confirmed everything chemists and physiologists said about the necessity of air to life. But before an enlightened aeronaut passed out in the thinning atmosphere of Herschel's infinite space, there were meteorological observations to make. Herschel fantasized about seeing space from space with an airborne telescope. Shelley remarked that clouds no longer seemed the same after they had been punctured by a balloon filled with barometric instruments. Yet the perils of ballooning—a dangerous and costly sport for few with a high mortality rate among its most enthusiastic participants and an even higher degree of equipment failure—revealed its limitations, making it a passing curiosity. Far better to travel through space seated inside one of Herschel's famously large telescopes—the true spaceships of his time.

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The limits of geographic exploration were no better represented than by the glorious adventures of physician Mungo Park. His *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (1799), an account of an expedition funded by the nascent Africa Association, the precursor to the Royal Geographical Society, made him the most celebrated British explorer at the turn of the century. Unlike Banks, Park did not rest on his laurels after a single voyage. He returned to the Gold Coast of West Africa in 1805, still in search of Timbuctoo. There he disappeared—or perhaps, improbably, he survived but did not return. His legendary heroism would haunt the poetry of Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley and Tennyson. His fellow Scotsman Sir Walter Scott would proudly recall that Park had once been his physician. Park's willingness to sacrifice himself for the advancement of knowledge made him the scientific paragon of every British geographer, anthropologist and explorer who followed in his footsteps.

In 1801, four years before Park disappeared in a boat on the Niger, a young Cornwall chemist knocked on the door of Banks's Soho Square townhouse. Inspired by the revolutionary work of chemists such as Joseph Priestley and Antoine Lavoisier, the handsome and charismatic Humphrey Davy would become the most successful British chemist of his generation. A flamboyant lecturer and experimenter, and an inveterate social climber, Davy made the latest discoveries in chemistry thrilling and seductive to a public eager to experience the heady sensations of knowledge. Priestley had inadvertently invented fizzy water while observing the effect of brewing on beer. While employed by the Bristol Pneumatic Institute, Davy instead would find a terrestrial application for balloon technology. Collaborating with James Watts's son Gregory, he found the perfect apparatus through which to inhale nitrous oxide. In spring 1799 Davy invited a circle of friends to experience the giddy effects of laughing gas. He was inspired enough to write a poem about it. Davy's celebrated self-experiment, in which he inhaled six quarts of N_2O on May 5, 1799, led to a loss of consciousness, feeling and memory. In 1844 the surgical potential of nitrous oxide would be demonstrated during dental surgery by Dr. Horace Wells in Hartford, Connecticut—far too late for Fanny Burney to benefit from its effects during the mastectomy she underwent in Paris at the hands of one of Napoleon's surgeons on September 30, 1811, leading her to pen one of the most eloquent and vivid accounts of pain ever written. In the short term, the psychosomatic effects (to borrow Coleridge's

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term) of Davy's discovery fascinated his contemporaries. He had invented a new pleasure for which they had no name.

If Romanticism began as an exploration of the enhancement of the senses, at the height of its success it grappled with the novel sensation of feeling nothing at all. Coleridge claimed that listening to Davy shortly after his discovery of laughing gas had enlarged his capacity for metaphor. The image of Davy as the nineteenth century's Timothy Leary, however, is softened by his subsequent career as a scion of the British scientific establishment: he was feted by Banks and admitted to the Royal Society, and he married well and educated the British gentry with his spellbinding lectures and demonstrations at the Royal Institution on Albemarle Street. It was after a teenage Mary Godwin observed Davy's performance at an Institution lecture in 1812—a time when Davy was celebrated for his isolation of potassium and for pioneering its role in electrochemical analysis—that she began to think about the good and ill of science. She would recall this experience during a discussion of the anatomist Giovanni Aldini's shocking reanimation experiments, which inspired her writing of *Frankenstein*. Her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, also found Davy a source of inspiration, and they seem to have read and discussed his chemistry together.

More than any other protagonist of Holmes's narrative, Davy was the poet's scientist. He summered in the Lake District, scrambling up its peaks and crossing its verdant meadows with the likes of Wordsworth, Scott and Robert Southey while debating the promise and futility of science. Such conversations, both in England and during his continental Grand Tour, would provoke his own melancholic reflection on the meaning of a life in science, his posthumous *Consolations in Travel, or the Last Days of a Philosopher* (1830). Davy also wrote enough poetry to fill another posthumous book. He rhapsodized about fly-fishing. He continued to make significant chemical discoveries—isolating chlorine, iodine and methane. Appropriately he would die from a lifetime of toxic pursuits on the shores of Lake Geneva in 1829, not far from the villa in which Byron and the Shelleys challenged each other to write an account of modern science in the summer of 1816. It is tempting to think that they talked of these matters when Davy visited Byron in Venice during his own travels.

Davy's reputation as a scientist rested not only on his ability to make the science of chemistry accessible and pleasurable—transforming it into a kind of poetry that would indeed be celebrated by all the leading British poets—but also on his tangible success as an early practitioner of industrial chemistry. His invention of the Davy Lamp in 1815 at the request of the Coal Mines Safety Committee was a triumph for science's utility at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. He was also smart enough to recognize the potential of a young bookbinder and blacksmith's son, Michael Faraday, while begrudging him any recognition for his independent accomplishments. Faraday's work on electromagnetism, his investigations of chlorine and benzene, his research on coal dust and metal corrosion and popular lectures on subjects such as the "Chemical History of a Candle" made him a distinguished and far more humble successor to his worldly employer, Davy. But Faraday would never be the poet's scientist.

In the 1820s Banks, Herschel and Davy died, as did many of the greatest poets who celebrated them. Holmes closes his epic account of the age of Romantic science by reflecting on their legacy. The task of advancing scientific knowledge fell to men such as the geologist Charles Lyell, mathematician and inventor Charles Babbage, philosopher William Whewell and Herschel's son, John, a mathematician, astronomer and pioneer of photography whose *A Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy* (1831) would captivate a young Charles Darwin, his head already full of the works of science and exploration of the previous century. Awash in honors that belonged more to his father, John Herschel escaped the scientific hothouse of London to find room to think, observe and experiment, unconstrained by the pressures of society on the talented only son of a famous scientist. Darwin admired Herschel, a man of independent means beholden to no patron or institution. In 1836, during his *Beagle* voyage, Darwin visited him in Cape Town, South Africa, where Herschel was conducting astronomical observations and making botanical illustrations. Darwin's conversations with Herschel in Cape Town seem to have further stimulated his interest in Lyell's work. For these and other accomplishments, the younger Herschel became the toast of British scientific society upon his return, in 1838. He would be buried in Westminster Abbey in 1871—an honor accorded to Newton and refused by Faraday. A decade later, Darwin joined him there. ■

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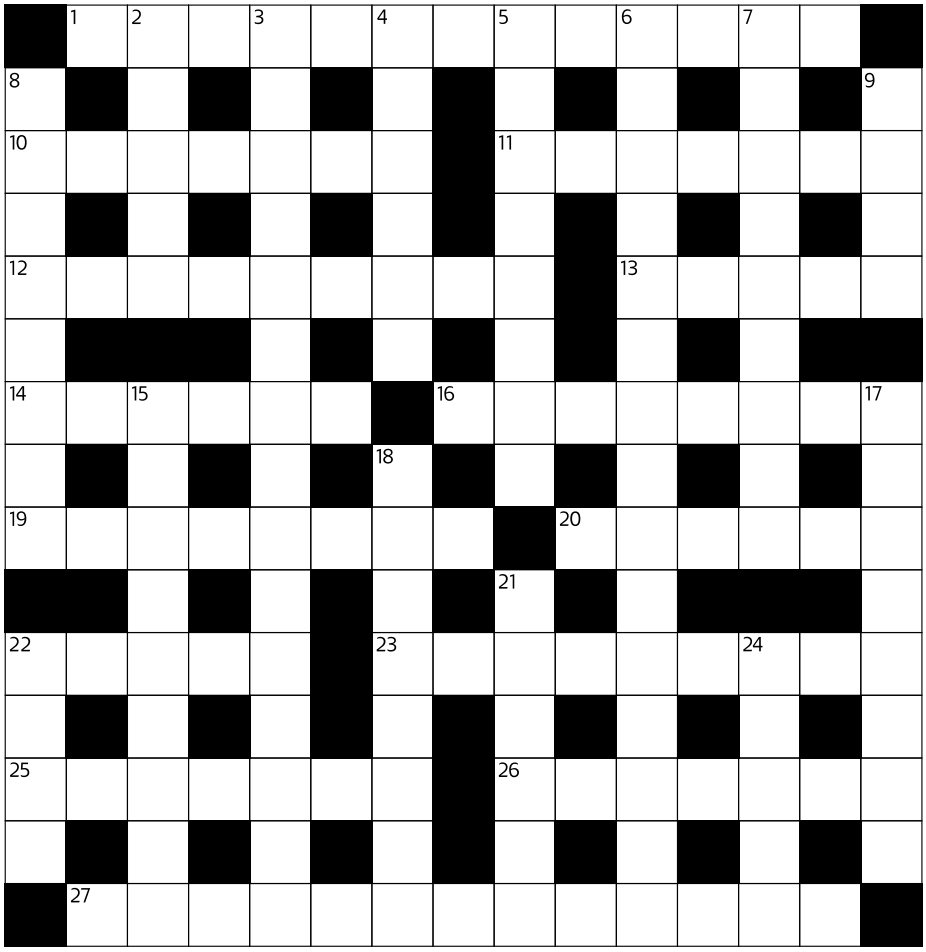

ACROSS

1 Perhaps one of the characters in *Guys and Dolls*, hoping to be better (Teddy was one). (3,4,6)

10 An obvious tool for the woodsman, but that's what the country does, according to some people! (7)

11 Drink and make merry with music—the oriental says it's good for you! (7)

12 Act put on with a short skirt, getting able to see the Republic, possibly. (9)

13 They may be proper, or quite common—implying an absence of sunburst. (5)

14 Even a bad priest might show such sprightly wit. (6)

16 The kind of supper a dog enjoys might be responsible for much growth. (8)

19 A little bit of money, as the British once said, should be quite a distant object. (8)

22 and **20** If fit enuf, have a fling with one of the main drags! (5,6)

23 The roving, roving traveler might have such a case! (9)

25 A ringer with a short, sharp shock—holding an experiment in the lab, perhaps. (4,3)

26 A rather large trouble for the maid, as they used to say! (7)

27 The stuntman for the actor has a purpose, but you might be expected to get it with a pun. (6,7)

DOWN

2 What I do when I flash a big smile in support? (1,4)

3 What a professional rider has to do to progress? (3,2,4,3,3)

4 A southern neighbor has me with a number of football players, and a little company to provide it. (6)

5 Drunk, as they say, but there's no getting on with it in the classic movie. (4,4)

6 What isolationists preached might be not in! Not in? Never! (15)

7 In part when I sleep, I cure another person of sensitive taste. (9)

8 One of the Yellow Pages might be an expensive put-on! (4,4)

9 Iron? Bronze? They're examples of what one does in time. (4)

15 Left on top, the rest comes up with a greasy liquid of this in case it's for the papers. (9)

17 Continue to prevaricate? Be quiet! (3,5)

18 Once containing a sour mixture, it certainly wasn't off the beam! (2,6)

21 Mar the surface between C and G, with one in the card game. (6)

22 Little 17 without the register? (4)

24 The arrangement of fiber in wood or cereal? (5)

This puzzle originally appeared in the May 28, 1988, issue.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1727

F	R	O	M	S	T	A	R	T		O	G	H	A	M
R		A		I		S		O		R		A		A
O	U	T	I	N	G	S		B	E	G	I	N	A	T
N		M		G		E		E		Y		D		R
T	H	E		L	E	S	S	O	N		H	O	P	I
		A		E		S		R		C		U		A
B	U	L	L	F	R	O	G		W	H	I	T	E	R
E				I		R		C		A				C
G	E	N	T	L	Y		T	O	F	I	N	I	S	H
I		O		E		C		L		N		M		
N	O	T	E		T	A	B	L	E	S		P	U	N
N		T		B		M		A		T		R		I
I	S	O	T	O	P	E		R	O	O	M	I	N	G
N		B		R		R		R		R		N		E
G	R	E	E	N		A	N	D	C	E	N	T	E	R

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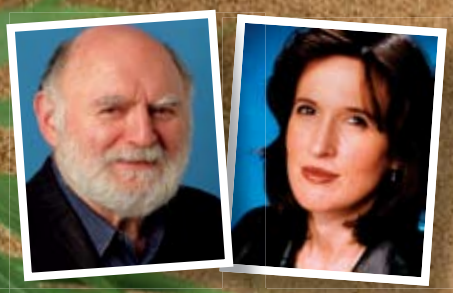

Victor Navasky and **Katrina vanden Heuvel** invite you to join them on *The Nation* Magazine's 13th annual seminar cruise to Bermuda.

Jeremy Scahill

Jim Hightower

Christopher Hayes

All Cruisers are invited to a Welcome Reception at The Nation's Offices in NYC the evening before we set sail!

Special guests include

Judy Collins
Special musical guest and author

Melissa Harris-Lacewell
Nation Columnist and MSNBC Contributor

Jessica Valenti
Founder of Feministing.com

John Nichols
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Calvin Trillin
The Nation's Deadline Poet

For more information, visit www.nationcruise.com or call 800-707-1634

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